

## CHAPTER 6

### VOTERS' PAMPHLET

#### **6.005 Purpose.**

The purpose of BCC Chapter 6 is to authorize and direct the Election Office in the production and mailing of a county voters' pamphlet, as directed by the County Clerk. The voters' pamphlet will provide electors with information necessary to make an informed choice in elections by allowing candidates and measure committees the opportunity to put forward information and arguments concerning ballot issues. [Ord. 99-0153; Ord. 2019-0291; Ord. 24-0323]

#### **6.105 Preparation and Mailing of Benton County Voters' Pamphlet.**

When directed by the County Clerk, the Elections Office, under the supervision of the Elections Manager, shall prepare and mail a county voters' pamphlet as follows:

- (1) The Elections Office shall prepare and have printed a county voters' pamphlet, which will include filed information on all candidates and measures that will appear on the ballot.
  - (2) The voters' pamphlets may be distributed to all households within the jurisdiction(s) taking part in the election. One pamphlet may be distributed to each household, regardless of how many voters reside in that household. All the measures and candidates that will appear on the ballot for the election may be included in one voters' pamphlet. Additional means of distribution may be utilized if determined necessary.
  - (3) No voters' pamphlet will be prepared unless there are candidate statements or measure explanatory statements filed with the county.
  - (4) The voters' pamphlets shall be distributed not later than the 7th day before the election or the last day for mailing ballots.
  - (5) Voter pamphlets may be distributed electronically or by including one in each ballot envelope mailed to voters. If the voters' pamphlet is distributed in this manner, the information in the pamphlets may be district specific.
- [Ord. 99-0153; Ord.2019-0291; Ord. 24-0323]

### **6.110 Other Required Items in Voters' Pamphlet.**

In compliance with state election law the following items shall be part of the Benton County voters' pamphlet or the combined voters' pamphlet, if inserting with a state produced pamphlet:

- (1) The requirements for a citizen to qualify to vote.
- (2) The requirements to register to vote.
- (3) The hours that the Benton County Elections Office will be open on Election Day, as well as the location of all ballot drop sites throughout the county and the hours during which voters will be able to deliver ballots to those drop sites.
- (4) Instructions to voters concerning their rights and duties dealing with the election process to include: how voters may obtain an absentee ballot, how to request a second ballot if the first was spoiled or that voters may cast a ballot in-person by coming to the Elections Office.
- (5) The ballot title of each measure, the explanatory statements, and any arguments submitted, in accordance with the terms of this ordinance.
- (6) Any candidate statements submitted in accordance with the terms of this ordinance.
- (7) Such other information and language translations as may be necessary, required, or appropriate.  
[Ord. 99-0153; Ord. 20190291; Ord. 24-0323]

### **6.205 Explanatory Statements.**

- (1) **Filing Deadlines.** Not later than the filing deadline for the notice of election provided in state statute.
  - (a) Any authorized governing body which institutes a measure to appear on the ballot, shall submit an impartial, simple, and understandable statement explaining the measure and its effect.
  - (b) For measures instituted by petition to the authorized governing body,

the governing body may submit an impartial, simple, and understandable statement explaining the measure and its effect.

(2) **Contents.** The explanatory statement shall contain words and numbers only and shall not exceed 500 words, shall be typewritten, and shall be an impartial, simple, and understandable statement, which explains the measure and its effects. This shall be in addition to the ballot title requirements set forth by state statute.

(3) **Availability to Public.** A full and complete copy of the explanatory statement shall be available to the public in the Elections Office.

(4) **Challenge and Review.**

(a) Any elector registered and qualified to vote on the subject measure may file a petition with the Elections Office, for an administrative review of the explanatory statement, not later than the 5<sup>th</sup> day after the last day on which a notice of election can be filed.

(b) A petition filed under this section shall contain a statement of reasons why the explanatory statement is not impartial, is insufficient, or unclear.

(c) Upon receipt of a petition, the County Clerk or their designee, shall schedule a hearing at the earliest possible date. At said hearing the petitioner and the filing body shall have an opportunity to present evidence and argue the question of impartiality, sufficiency, or clarity of the explanatory statement. At the conclusion of the hearing, the County Clerk may modify the explanatory statement to comply with the requirements of this section in a manner that reflects the drafter's intent as closely as possible. The modified explanatory statement, or the original explanatory statement, if not modified by the Elections Manager, shall be certified and included in the voters' pamphlet.

[Ord. 99-0153; Ord. 2019-0291; Ord. 24-0323]

### **6.305 Arguments.**

(1) **Filing Deadline.** Arguments supporting or opposing a measure must be filed not later than the 5<sup>th</sup> day after the last day on which the notice of election may have been filed.

(2) Form of Argument.

(a) The argument filed shall be in words and numbers only, shall be typewritten, and shall be no more than 325 words.

(b) The Elections Office shall reject any argument which:

(i) Contains any obscene, profane, scandalous or defamatory language.

(ii) Incites, promotes or advocates hatred, abuse, violence or hostility toward or which tends to cast ridicule or shame upon any person or group by reason of race, color, gender, religion or manner of worship.

(iii) Contains any language that may not legally be circulated in the mail.

(iv) Otherwise does not comply with this ordinance.

(3) **Filing Fee.** Shall be established by resolution approved by the Benton County Board of Commissioners.

(4) **Subscription and Disclaimer.** The argument shall also contain the name of the submitting organization or person; whether the argument supports or opposes the measure; and a disclaimer in substantially the following form;

"The printing of this argument does not constitute an endorsement by Benton County, nor does the County warrant the accuracy or truth of any statements made in the argument."

(5) The language referred to in BCC 6.305(4) shall not be included in the 325 word limitation set forth in BCC 6.305(2).

[Ord. 99-0153; Ord. 2019-0291; Ord. 24-0323]

## 6.405 Candidate Statements

(1) **Filing Deadline.** Not later than the filing date set forth in state statute for filing for the position, a candidate may file with the Benton County Elections Office

a typewritten statement of reasons why the candidate should be nominated or elected; and a photograph of the candidate.

(2) Contents of candidate's statement.

(a) The candidate's statement shall consist of words or numbers only and shall not exceed 325 words. The candidate's statement shall begin with a summary of the following: Occupation, education and occupational background, and prior governmental experience.

(b) The Elections Office shall reject any candidate's statement which:

(i) Contains any obscene, profane, scandalous or defamatory language.

(ii) Incites, promotes or advocates hatred, abuse, violence or hostility toward or which tends to cast ridicule or shame upon any person or group by reason of race, color, gender, religion or manner of worship.

(iii) Contains any language which may not legally be circulated in the mail.

(iv) Otherwise does not comply with this ordinance.

(c) Each candidate's statement submitted shall be subscribed and sworn to before a notary or a Deputy Clerk in the Elections Office, and the subscription shall be in the following form:

"I hereby subscribe and swear under penalty of law that the above submitted candidate's statement is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief."

(3) **Photograph Requirements.** A candidate, at the time of filing a candidate's statement, may submit a photograph for use in the voters' pamphlet. A candidate shall not submit for inclusion in the voters' pamphlet a photograph that was taken more than two years before the date the photograph is filed with the Elections Office.

(a) A photograph submitted for inclusion in the voters' pamphlet shall:

- (i) Be a conventional photograph with a plain background; and
  - (ii) Show the face or head, neck and shoulders of the candidate; and
  - (iii) Be of sufficient quality and size for reproduction.
- (b) A photograph submitted for inclusion in the voters' pamphlet shall not:
- (i) Include the hands or anything held in the hands of the candidate;
  - (ii) Show the candidate wearing a judicial robe, a hat or military, police or fraternal uniform;
  - (iii) Show the uniform or insignia of any organization; and
  - (iv) Include the display of any flag or pennant.
- (4) **Filing Fee.** Each candidate's statement filed shall be accompanied by the required fee, \$25 for unpaid offices and \$100 for paid offices. The Elections Office shall reject any candidate's statement tendered for filing unless accompanied by the specified fee.
- (5) **Language.** The subscription language provided for in BCC 6.405(2)(c) shall not be included in the 325 word limitation set forth in BCC 6.405(2)(a).  
[Ord. 99-0153; Ord. 2019-0291; Ord. 24-0323]

### **6.505 Miscellaneous.**

- (1) **Spacing and Type Size.** The Elections Manager shall have the authority to determine type size and spacing to be used in the printing of explanatory statements, arguments and candidate's statements. The Elections Manager shall exercise this authority only for the purpose of ensuring that each explanatory statement, argument or candidate's statement occupies no more than one page of the printed voters' pamphlet.
- (2) **Deadline.** A measure, explanatory statement, argument, or candidate's statement, together with the required fee, must be filed with the Elections Office not later than 5 PM of the day the document or fee is due. If the day the document or fee is due is a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday, the document or fee can be filed by 5

PM on the next business day. If a person is physically present within or in line to enter the Elections Office, in order to deliver the document or fee, the person shall be considered as having begun the act of delivering the document or fee. The person shall then be permitted to file so long as that person does not leave prior to completing the process with the Elections Office.

(3) **Forms.** The Elections Office may develop and require the use of standardized forms for any or all of the filings authorized or required by this ordinance.  
[Ord. 99-0153; Ord. 2019-0291; Ord. 24-0323]

### **6.605 Disposition of funds.**

(1) The Benton County voters' pamphlet shall be published and distributed under the authority of the Benton County Clerk.

(2) Revenues derived pursuant to this ordinance shall be utilized to offset the cost of producing and distributing the voters' pamphlet. If the revenues generated, as a result of argument fees, candidate's statement fees or other revenues exceeds the total cost of producing and distributing the voters' pamphlet, the balance shall be used to offset the election costs.

[Ord. 99-0153; Ord. 2019-0291; Ord. 24-0323]