



RESOLUTION OF BEXAR COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT EXPRESSING ITS SUPPORT OF THE BEXAR COUNTY S.M.A.R.T ELECTION INITIATIVE AND ENCOURAGING THE ELECTIONS ADMINISTRATOR TO CONSIDER IMPLEMENTING CERTAIN MEASURES TO FURTHER PROTECT THE INTEGRITY OF THE NOVEMBER 2020 GENERAL ELECTION AND SAFEGUARD THE HEALTH OF VOTERS AND ELECTION WORKERS IN BEXAR COUNTY.

WHEREAS, Bexar County and communities throughout the United States have experienced devastating economic loss, housing instability, food insecurity, surges in demand on health care systems, and the loss of countless precious lives because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Recent spikes in COVID-19 positive cases, often after holidays or in relation to large public gatherings, intensify these extraordinary challenges and prolong disruption to nearly all aspects of everyday life;

WHEREAS, The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing barriers to voting and election participation, making it more difficult for people to exercise their right to vote and presents unprecedented challenges for elections administrators across the State of Texas;

WHEREAS, on behalf of the citizens of Bexar County and in order take every measure to protect the integrity of the November 2020 General Election, Commissioners Court hereby expresses its support of the Bexar County Safe, Modern, Accessible, Reliable, and Transparent "S.M.A.R.T" Election Initiative. S.M.A.R.T Election Initiative measures aim to mitigate the threat to public health, maximize voter access, and support citizens in exercising their democratic right in a safe manner during the COVID 19 pandemic;

WHEREAS, The Texas Election Code assigns specific authority and duties related to the conduct of General Elections to the both the Governing Body Ordering the Election and to the Election Official administering the election;

WHEREAS, Bexar County Elections has received \$1,740,599 in federal funds appropriated from the Help America Vote Act and \$4,235,046 appropriated from Bexar County's Coronavirus Relief Fund Court to support the administration of elections during the global pandemic;

WHEREAS, Commissioners Court supports advancing S.M.A.R.T Initiative measures within Court's legal authority and encourages the Bexar County Elections Administrator to implement S.M.A.R.T Initiative measures within her legal authority;

WHEREAS, by passage of this resolution, Commissioners Court affirms its commitment to provide the Bexar County Elections Administrator with the necessary resources, infrastructure, and support to implement Bexar County S.M.A.R.T Election Initiative measures.

NOW, THEREFORE, AFTER DUE CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMISSIONERS COURT OF BEXAR COUNTY be it **RESOLVED** that the Bexar County Commissioners Court hereby supports the Bexar County S.M.A.R.T Election Initiative and the implementation of measures through the following actions:

SECTION I

Within the legal authority and duties of Commissioners Court, the Court hereby supports bringing forward for further approval or advancing through administrative implementation of the following actions:

- i. Allocate a portion of the funds previously provided to the Elections Administrator for the purchase of PPE including, but not limited to, face coverings and access to hand sanitizing station(s) and make widely available for voters at all polling locations throughout Early Voting and on Election Day;
- ii. Allocate a portion of funds previously provided to the Elections Administrator to mail to all eligible voters age 65 and over who have not already applied, applications to Vote by Mail with prepaid return postage;
- iii. Allocate a portion of funds previously provided to the Elections Administrator to provide prepaid return postage to those who receive balloting materials to vote by mail;
- iv. Order that one mega vote center be located in each of the four Bexar County Precincts during Early Voting and on Election Day for the purposes of maximizing social distancing, but not to be used as a reason to consolidating or removing other Early Voting or Election Day locations;
- v. Order personal appearance voting to be conducted at least 12 hours on each weekday of the early voting period and expand the hours on certain days to at least 10:00 p.m.;
- vi. Allocate a portion of funding previously provided to the Elections Administrator or the recruitment and hiring of at least 25% supplemental Election Judges, Alternate Judges, and Election Clerks to ensure there is sufficient pool of backup workers trained and ready to fill last minute vacancies.
- vii. Provide appropriate elections training to all non-essential or underutilized Bexar County employees to serve as emergency backup poll workers or elections clerk for the Early Voting Period and Election Day.
- viii. Appropriate funds to the Public Information Office to mail to every household with a registered voter(s), a Sample Ballot, information on Early Voting and Election Day Hours and Locations, and information on voting safely during COVID-19.

SECTION II

Encourages the Election Administrator, within the legal authority and duties of her position to bring forward for approval or advance through administrative implementation of the following actions:

- ix. An Order that personal appearance voting be conducted from 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 17; Sunday, October 18; Saturday, October 23; and Sunday, October 23, 2020 during the early voting period; and
- x. Make available an online tracking system of vote-by-mail ballot applications and mail ballots

SECTION III

Further evaluation of the following measures utilizing supplemental input currently pending from local public health experts, official opinions or guidance from the Secretary of State, and/or through the exploration of legal avenues permitting implementation:

- xi. Increasing the number of curbside voting machines to facilitate a drive-thru voting option; and
- xii. Alternative delivery options for satellite in-person mail ballot delivery from voters on Election Day; and
- xiii. An Order to operate a 24-hour polling site at least one day each week of early voting at a minimum of one Early Voting Polling Location.

SECTION IV

To better assist the Court understanding the challenges presented in the upcoming November general election and in order to determine the best allocation of public resources, the Court requests that the Bexar County Elections Administrator prepare and submit to the Court members for consideration on or before August 25, 2020 in preparation for a presentation at the next public meeting:

- xiv. The methodology to be used for determining the most effective and equitable number and location of Early Voting and Election Day sites accounting for projected voter turnout, voting equipment reductions and gathering limitations as a result of recommended distancing protocols, average time it takes to cast a ballot, and target voter wait times; and
- xv. Any budget revisions or requests for additional funding or resources that might be necessary for the successful implementation all of the measures outlined in this resolution.

Approved this ____ day of _____, 2020.

Nelson W. Wolff

County Judge

Sergio “Chico” Rodriguez

Commissioner, Precinct 1

Justin Rodriguez

Commissioner, Precinct 2

Kevin Wolff

Commissioner, Precinct 3

Tommy Calvert

Commissioner, Precinct 4

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