MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Snyder and Members of the Portland City Council
FROM: Katherine L. Jones, City Clerk
DATE: May 27, 2020
RE: Consolidation of Polling Places

Governor Mills is going to be issuing an amendment to her Executive Order regarding Elections. Part of the Executive Order is waiving the 90-day requirement to consolidate polling places.

In order for election to run smoothly and efficiently I need to have all polling places secured, and with the proper staff; this consists of Wardens, Ward Clerks and 8 election clerks, (most election clerks don’t want to work all day 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM) so we offer shifts, morning and afternoon, which now brings me to 16 people per polling place X 11 = 176 election clerks, Deputy Registrars are essential to registering voters on election day, we currently use 4 per polling place X 11 = 44.

The CDC guidelines for July-August maintains prohibition on gatherings of more than 50 people and At-Risk people should stay home when possible. Most of my election clerks are in the high-risk category. In order for this election to run successfully we need 242 election staff.

Currently I have one polling place that we need to move. The Exposition building is currently being used by the City to quarantine our most venerable residents. The Expo will need to move to the Troubh Ice Arena for this election. If the Council so wished to consolidate, this Order to move the polling place from the Expo to the Troubh Ice Arena would have to be postponed indefinitely. It has been approved by the Secretary of State’s Office and was filed within the 60 days.
Currently one third of the Wardens (Wardens are the appointed individuals that run the election at the polling places), are not willing to work this election. The majority of the election clerks are in the high-risk category and are not willing to take a risk and work this election.

If we were able to consolidate polling places for this election only, I would be able to use two facilities one on peninsular and one off peninsular and keep the Island Voting on Peaks Island.

The City Manager has been advised that we could use the Civic Center for one polling place. Voting at this facility would allow for Districts 1-1, 1-2, 2-1, 2-2 and 3-2 to vote. Entering the Civic Center on Center Street (the door that they bring the production in). If inclement weather we can have proper distancing and snake lines around the seating areas, and allow for voters with disabilities to enter and stay within the guidelines at the incoming table.

1. We can have four lines entering the facility. Keeping within the six-foot distancing, within the four lines, we can mark on the ground accordingly.

2. Check in Tables: Election Clerks would be behind plexiglass barriers and would be divided up using 6 clerks checking in the voters by using only 4 letters of the alphabet each (XYZ being 1).

3. Ballot clerks also behind plexiglass barriers putting the voter’s proper ballots on the table for the voters to pick up.

4. Voters who enter the building upon checking in will be given a pen for them to use and take with them.

5. Staff will be able to wipe down booths after each use. Voters would then take their ballots to the ballot boxes and then exit the building.

6. Ample room for Poll Watchers and accommodating petitioners. This wouldn’t be allowable at our other locations due to size of the facilities and the six-foot distancing.

7. Off peninsular voting can be facilitated at the First Baptist Church, Canco Road. This facility has ample parking and is on the bus route. We would be able to have Districts 3-1, 4-1, 4-2, 5-1, and 5-2 at this facility. First Baptist Church has a very large gymnasium, allowing voters to enter the facility at one door and exiting by using another door. We would be able to use the same set up for checking in and receiving ballots.
8. If the Council is willing to consolidate for the July 14, 2020 election, I can use the Wardens and Ward Clerks that want to work and the election clerks that want to work which will give me coverage for the two polling places. I can also use City Staff to assist where needed.


10. I am required to have a public hearing on the consolidation. Title 21-A section 631, the municipal officers must hold a public hearing a least 90 days before an election. The Governor’s Executive Order will suspend the 90-day consolidation order and allow for public comment up to 15 days prior to the election. We will be in compliance by having our public comment on June 15th.

11. To have a successful election I have to have adequate staffing, Wardens must be present to oversee the entire election all day. Having a third of my election workers absent is very concerning as I take pride in running elections successfully.