

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 4, 2023
TO: City Council, City of Greenbelt
FROM: Board of Elections
RE: Proposed Charter Amendment: Counting of Ballots

The Board of Elections earlier submitted proposed legislation, as part of a bill to amend Charter to change the vote counting procedure set out in Charter Section 28.

Section 28 provides in its original language that the Board should begin counting ballots “[u]pon the closing of the polls.” This limitation in recent election years has presented an inconvenience to Board members, who are apparently not to begin vote counting until polls close. This delays the tabulation and certification processes until the early morning hours after Election Day.

By eliminating the polls closing language, Council would clarify that the Board of Elections may start its vote counting process earlier than the closing of the polls. That would increase efficiency without sacrificing accuracy or compromising voter rights.

The Section 28 language submitted in the draft concerning Charter amendments for noncitizen voting may be separated out of the draft and placed in a new, stand-alone bill. This bill, approved this year, would then be effective in this fall’s election.