

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 3, 2023
TO: City Clerk, City of Greenbelt
FROM: Board of Elections
RE: Policy for the Initiation of an Election Campaign

The Election Code and Charter for the City require candidates for office to complete certain items and tasks before they campaign, raise funds, and have their names placed on a ballot. No specific time requirements are stated, however, in the Charter or the Code.

The purpose of this memorandum is to set out a Board of Elections policy for candidates, as they begin their campaigns. The Board finds and hereby concludes that if this policy is followed, in substance, then elections will be fairly conducted, financial transparency will be encouraged, and voters and the public will be best informed.

Charter requires every candidate to file a nomination petition signed by at least fifty registered voters. The signatures show that the voters support the campaign of the named candidate. Though City law sets no time for the petition, the Board finds and concludes that a campaign should not be initiated, with canvassing, advertising, or fundraising, until this step is completed by filing the petition with the Clerk.

The Election Code states that each candidate must open a bank account for receiving and dispersing campaign funds. These donations and expenditures are to be collected and made and then reported on three separate campaign financial reports, filed by designated dates. The Code also requires each candidate to appoint a campaign treasurer.

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Although the Code does not set deadlines for these functions, the Board finds and hereby concludes that the purposes of these Code provisions cannot be met unless an account is established and a treasurer is appointed by or at the time a nomination petition is filed, before any campaigning or fundraising is begun.

The forms for these requirements may be found online or obtained from the Clerk's office.

The Board makes no findings as to this stated policy for the election to be held in November of this year. The policy is set out here, for future elections, as timing questions have been brought to our attention before the completion of this election cycle.