

CITY OF WILLMAR

MUNICIPAL ELECTION
AND
CAMPAIGN MANUAL

Prepared By:

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I. General Information

A. Council Member Eligibility

In order to be eligible to be elected to the City Council, an individual must be at least 21 years of age, or older, on the date of assuming office (January 6, 2025). The individual must be residing in the Ward to be eligible to hold the office of Council member for that Ward. The Mayor may reside in any Ward of the City.

B. Wards and Precincts

The City of Willmar is divided into four Wards with three Precincts in each Ward. The division is based on population information supplied by the Federal Census conducted every ten years. (See Attachment A)

Check the City Website at www.willmarmn.gov to review current precinct areas.

C. Mayor and City Council

The Mayor shall be elected at the regular City election held every even-numbered year by the direct vote of the people for a term of four (4) years.

The City Council consists of eight (8) members, two (2) from each Ward, elected for four (4) year terms with the terms staggered so that one Council Member from each Ward is elected at each biennial election.

D. Election Days

- The Primary Election will be held on Tuesday, August 13, 2024.
- The General Election will be held on Tuesday, November 5, 2024.

II. Candidates

Candidate filing period for the Election is May 21, through June 4, 2024. Any eligible person may become a candidate by filing an affidavit of candidacy with the City Clerk at the City Office Building located at 333 SW 6th Street in Willmar. A fee of twenty (\$20.00) dollars is to be paid at the time of filing.

The Affidavit states the following:

- The residence of the candidate.
- That the candidate is a qualified voter in the City.
- The office for which the candidate is running.
- That the candidate has not filed for any other office at the same election.
- That the candidate's name as it appears on the affidavit for ballot designation is the candidate's true name or the name by which the candidate is commonly and generally known in the community.

A candidate may withdraw from the election by filing an Affidavit of Withdrawal with the City Clerk by 5:00 p.m., June 6, 2024. Thereafter, no candidate may file an Affidavit of Withdrawal.

III. Campaign Practices

A. Campaign Committee

A candidate may select one personal campaign committee

B. Campaign literature must include names

(a) A person who participates in the preparation or dissemination of campaign material other than as provided in section [211B.05, subdivision 1](#), that does not prominently include the name and address of the person or committee causing the material to be prepared or

disseminated in a disclaimer substantially in the form provided in paragraph (b) or (c) is guilty of a misdemeanor.

(b) Except in cases covered by paragraph (c), the required form of disclaimer is: "Prepared and paid for by the committee,(address)" for material prepared and paid for by a principal campaign committee, or "Prepared and paid for by the committee,(address)" for material prepared and paid for by a person or committee other than a principal campaign committee. If the material is produced and disseminated without cost, the words "paid for" may be omitted from the disclaimer.

(c) In the case of broadcast media, the required form of disclaimer is: "Paid for by the committee." If the material is produced and broadcast without cost, the required form of the disclaimer is: "The committee is responsible for the content of this message."

(d) This section does not apply to fund-raising tickets, business cards, personal letters, or similar items that are clearly being distributed by the candidate.

(e) This section does not apply to an individual or association that is not required to register or report under chapter 10A or 211A.

(f) This section does not apply to the following:

(1) bumper stickers, pins, buttons, pens, or similar small items on which the disclaimer cannot be conveniently printed;

(2) skywriting, wearing apparel, or other means of displaying an advertisement of such a nature that the inclusion of a disclaimer would be impracticable; and

(3) online banner ads and similar electronic communications that link directly to an online page that includes the disclaimer.

C. Campaign Financial Report Certification Forms and Campaign Financial Report

All municipal candidates are now required to certify that they have either filed all necessary Campaign Financial Reports or that no reports need to be filed. These certification forms will be distributed to candidates by the City Clerk with the Affidavit of Candidacy and to committee treasurers filing a Campaign Financial Report.

Campaign Financial Reports are to be used by candidates and are required by Minnesota Statutes.

For additional election laws and procedures, please visit the Minnesota Secretary of State's Office at www.sos.state.mn.us.

Campaign reporting requirements under 211A:

Initial report

An initial report must be filed within 14 days after a candidate or committee raises or spends more than \$750. Additional required reports must be filed once an initial report is filed.

Year-end report

A year end report is due on January 31 of each year following the year when the initial report is filed. Additional reports are required in a year when the candidate's name or the ballot question a committee is working for or against appears on the ballot.

Pre-primary report

Due 10 days (by August 2, 2024) before the primary or special primary. This report covers the period from where the previous report left off up to 5 days before when it is due.

Pre-general report

Due 10 days (by October 25, 2024) before the general election or special election. This report covers the period from where the pre-primary report left off up to 5 days before when it is due.

Certification of Filing

Due 7 days (by November 12, 2024) after the general or special election. **A certification of filing must be filed regardless if a candidate or committee raises or spends enough to file an initial report.** It indicates to the filing officer that either all the required campaign reports have been filed or the candidate or committee did not raise or spend more than \$750 in the calendar year. The [Campaign Financial Report Certification of Filing](#) form is available for download from our [Campaign Forms and Handouts](#) page.

Post-general report

Due 30 days (by December 5, 2024) after a general or special election. This report covers the period from where the pre-general report left off up to 5 days before when it is due.

Final report

A candidate or committee may file a final report once all debts are paid and all assets in excess of \$100 in the aggregate are disposed of. Filing a final report ends campaign reporting activity, but a new initial report must be filed if the candidate or committee raises or spends more than \$750 after this point. (See Attachment B)

D. Campaign lawn signs

Some municipalities have ordinances restricting the placement of lawn signs. In a state general election year (even years), these ordinances are overruled by Minnesota Statutes 211B.045 from 46 days before the primary until 10 days after the general election, and campaign signs may be posted in any size and number. For 2024, this period begins June 28 and ends November 15. In municipalities which have no sign ordinance, campaign signs may be posted in any size and number throughout the year.

Additional information on the legal placement of signs may be found on the Minnesota Department of Transportation's webpage about [signs along highway right of way](#).

IV. Election Day Activities

An individual shall be allowed to go to and from the polling place for the purpose of voting without unlawful interference. No one except an election official or an individual who is waiting to register or to vote shall stand within 100 feet of the entrance to a polling place. The entrance to a polling place is the doorway or point of entry leading in to the room or area where voting is occurring.

A person may not display campaign material, post signs, ask, solicit, or in any manner try to induce or persuade a voter within a polling place or within 100 feet of the building in which a polling place is situated, or anywhere on the public property on which a polling place is situated, on primary or election day to vote for or refrain from voting for a candidate or ballot question. A person may not provide political badges, political buttons, or other political insignia to be worn at or about the polling place on the day of a primary or general election. A political badge, political button, or other political insignia may not be worn at or about the polling place on a primary or general election day.

V. Mayor and Council Member Qualities

A. Leadership Qualities

- Integrity
- Perseverance
- Commitment
- Ability to plan
- Vision
- Initiative
- Courage

B. What Makes a Good Public Official?

- Ability to work as a team
- Conviction that public service is important
- Ability to make decisions
- Loyalty to the democratic process
- An open mind
- Ability to compromise
- Time and energy to devote to City Council business including Council development opportunities
- Ability to accept the will of the majority
- Respect for City staff
- Ability to communicate well with others
- Desire to make the City of Willmar a better community

VI. City Council Meetings

The current City Council meets on the first and third Mondays of each month at 6:30 p.m. Special meetings and workshop dates may also be scheduled.

VII. Elected Officials Criteria

MAYOR:

- Four-year Term.
- Annual salary of \$19,250.00.
- Preside at all City Council meetings.
- Recommends for appointment, subject to the approval of five members of the Council, the members of all committees, boards, and commissions.
- Prepare, with the assistance of City administration, an annual budget and capital Improvements program to the Council.
- Present a message to the Council as to the affairs of the City and recommend measures considered necessary and desirable.
- Be recognized as the official head of the City for all ceremonial purposes and by the courts for the purpose of serving civil process.

CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS:

- Eight Council Members, two from each of the four Wards.
- Four-year terms, staggered so that one Council Member from each Ward is elected at each biennial election.
- Annual salary of \$12,500.00.
- All powers of the City shall be vested in the City Council except as otherwise provided by law or City Charter, and the Council shall provide for the exercise thereof and for the performance of all duties and obligations imposed on the City by law.
- Adopt or amend an administrative code or establish, alter, or abolish any City department, office, or agency.

- Levy taxes, except as otherwise provided in the City Charter with respect to the property tax levied by adoption of the budget.
- Provide for a fine or other penalty or establish a rule or regulation for violation of which a fine or other penalty is imposed.
- Regulate the rate charged for its services by a public utility.
- Authorize the borrowing of money or conveyance of any lands of the City.
- Adopt, amend, or repeal ordinances previously adopted.