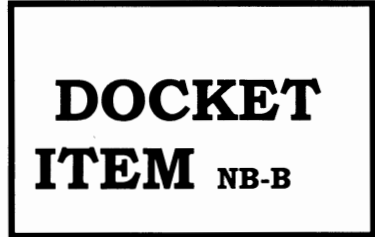


New Business
September 17, 2019



NB (B) REQUEST FOR APPROPRIATION OF \$40,400 FOR THE EXPANDED PROMOTION OF NOVEMBER AND MAY ELECTIONS- DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

As noted in the attached memorandum, Council Member Ike requested that the Public Communications Department develop a marketing campaign to expand the City’s messaging to promote the upcoming November and May elections. The goal is to encourage more Chesapeake residents to participate in the electoral process by casting ballots on Election Day.

Staff members reviewed the ways we promote elections in the City and found we can do more with our existing processes and add new message delivery methods. Much of what we currently do is free because we use existing City resources or “piggyback” on other messages at the appropriate times. In order to expand our efforts, additional costs will be incurred, which staff members outlined in the supplemental information.

If approved for the current fiscal year, two elections will be covered by this promotional campaign, the state election on November 5, 2019 and the local election on May 5, 2020. The program is designed to reuse a number of messaging elements like signs. For the first election, signs would be purchased, and then, in future elections, dates could be changed with stickers/replacement vinyl, which accounts for the difference in price between the elections.

The appropriation request of \$40,400 will cover the elections in FY 20; however, due to deadlines for advertising and printing



needs for the November election, it is requested to approve this appropriation as an emergency.

Presented to City Council is a request for an appropriation of \$40,400 for the expanded promotion of November and May elections; its approval as an emergency is requested.

Staff: Heath Covey, Director of Public Communications

Memorandum



TO: The Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council
VIA: James E. Baker, City Manager 
FROM: Heath Covey, Director of Public Communications 
DATE: September 10, 2019
SUBJECT: Expanded Promotion of Election Day

At the request of Councilmember Robert Ike, the Public Communications Department has developed a marketing campaign to expand the City's messaging to promote the dates for upcoming November and May elections. The overarching goal of this project is to encourage more Chesapeake residents to participate in the electoral process by casting ballots on election day.

A review of the ways in which election day is currently promoted shows that, while a notable number of avenues are currently followed, more can be done in both existing and new message delivery methods. Much of the current messaging is done at no cost, either using existing City resources or through "piggybacking" with other messages at the appropriate times. In order to expand the outreach efforts, additional costs will be incurred, which are detailed in the attached budget.

For the current fiscal year, two elections would be covered by the campaign. Those are the state election on November 5, 2019, and the local election on May 5, 2020. The program is designed to reuse a number of message elements (signs, etc.), in some cases with the addition of stickers to update the message for the current election date. This accounts for the differences in costs between the November and May elections. The total requested appropriation for the two elections in this fiscal year is \$40,400. In order to meet the printing and other deadlines necessary to begin with the November election, we respectfully request that this item be approved as an Emergency, when it appears on the September 17, 2019, City Council Agenda.

While no messaging campaign can guarantee results, particularly when the ultimate decision to take action rests with the individual citizens, we are confident that we can provide significantly more awareness regarding the dates for elections. Hopefully, this awareness and encouragement to participate will drive more voters to the polls here in Chesapeake.

If I can provide any additional information on the proposed campaign, please don't hesitate to contact me.

HEC/hec

cc: Jacob Stroman, City Attorney
Wanda Barnard-Bailey, Deputy City Manager
Robert Geis, Deputy City Manager
Laura Fitzpatrick, Deputy City Manager
Eric Martin, Director of Public Works

Enhanced Election Day Promotion Campaign Budget (FY 19-20)

Item	Purpose	Qty.	Cost per Piece	Total Cost	Reuse?
Outdoor Signs - Large GENERIC MESSAGE	To attach to existing poles at various high-visibility intersections and locations around the City. Message would be generic, without date (see below)	20	\$140.00	\$2,800.00	Yes
Outdoor Signs - Medium DATE SPECIFIC	To attach to existing poles at various high-visibility intersections and locations around the City. Message would be the date of the target election.	20	\$15.00	\$300.00	No
Outdoor Signs - Medium DATE SPECIFIC	To attach to existing poles at various high-visibility intersections and locations around the City. Message would be the deadline to register to vote for the target election.	20	\$15.00	\$300.00	No
Roadside Signs - with Date (allowing for update via stickers)	To be placed at strategic locations Citywide, both in conjunction with candidate signs and in other spots, to promote the date of election.	500	\$2.20	\$1,100.00	Yes 2-3 cycles
Outdoor Flag Signs - Also called "Feather" signs	Large, flag-like banners to place in a prominent location outside each polling place. Message on the order of "Election Day TODAY"	65	\$130.00	\$8,450.00	Yes
Variable Message Signs (Rental)	Rental signs to supplement City units, which may be required elsewhere. For Election Day promotion only (2 weeks in advance). (1)	4	\$1,800.00	\$7,200.00	No
Bookmark-size Flyer/Reminder	To be distributed at Libraries, Community Centers, City events, etc. in advance of Election Day. Could also be inserted into bills or other correspondence from the City. Could also include Census 2020 information (on reverse side)	20,000	\$0.15	\$3,000.00	No

Item	Purpose	Qty.	Cost per Piece	Total Cost	Reuse?
Digital Advertising Placement	Ads placed on Pilotonline.com, targeted only to Chesapeake subscribers, promoting election day. (1 package - 50,000 impressions)	1	\$450.00	\$450.00	No
Digital Advertising Placement	Ads placed on Pilotonline.com, targeted only to Chesapeake subscribers, promoting register to vote. (1 package - 50,000 impressions)	1	\$450.00	\$450.00	No
1/4 page, full color ad in the Chesapeake Clipper	To promote the deadline to register to vote (placed the Sunday before)	1	\$500.00	\$500.00	No
1/4 page, full color ad in the Chesapeake Clipper	To promote Election Day (placed the Sunday before)	1	\$500.00	\$500.00	No
Contingency Funds	To allow for set-up costs, inflation, or unanticipated costs	1	\$1,150.00	\$1,150.00	No
To deploy the full campaign for ONE election cycle, the total cost would be				\$26,200.00	
Note (1): The Variable Message signs (rental) quantity would potentially be reduced, based on availability of City-owned units at the time of need.					
Additional Costs for the 2nd Election , allowing for updates to certain materials (roadside signs, etc.) and complete replacement or repurchase of other items (digital ads, flyers, etc.).				\$7,000.00	
Additional Rental Costs for the 2nd Election for the rental of Variable Message signs, subject to the same caveats regarding lowering the number/cost based on availability of City-owned units at time of need.				\$7,200.00	
Total Cost for 2 Elections				\$40,400.00	

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

“Enhanced Promotion of Election Day in Chesapeake”

PRINCIPAL

CLIENT: Chesapeake Voters

GOAL: To increase awareness among voters of the date of elections in the City of Chesapeake, and to encourage potential voters to participate in those elections, both by registering to vote and by going to the polls.

RULES: All activities conducted as part of this plan shall be done in a purely non-partisan manner. The plan’s messages and materials shall speak exclusively to the date of the election, the importance of exercising the right to vote, and the ways in which a Chesapeake citizen may cast their ballots. No reference to candidates, parties, or other partisan topics will be included.

SUPPORT: The Public Communications Department will oversee and direct this communications plan, with assistance from other City departments and outside entities, as appropriate. Departments expected to have a role in the plan include: Information Technology (Web resources and other), Public Works (signage placements), PRT and Libraries (placement of messages), Human Services-Community Programs (outreach via civic leagues and faith community), and others.

TIMELINE: While some elements of the plan will be “on-going,” the largest push of the messaging efforts will take place during the two weeks just prior to the target election day. This timeline is chosen so as to provide adequate notice while also limiting the chances for message loss due to time. A separate timeline for registration-specific messages will be established, to parallel the overall campaign timeline.

FUNDING: A large majority of the messaging tactics in this plan can be accomplished either at no cost or for minimal costs related to pre-existing City outreach efforts. Payment for new costs will be requested via City Council appropriation from contingency funds.

PROPOSED RECURRING MESSAGE THEMES

“It’s Your Right AND Your Responsibility”

“Your Vote Matters”

“Exercise Your Right”

“Local Elections – Local Impact”

“Be Part of the Process”

KEY MESSAGE ELEMENTS

WHEN is Election Day?

WHEN can I vote (times)?

WHY is Election Day important?

WHY should I care?

WHERE can I vote?

WHERE can I see who is running?

WHAT do I need to be able to vote? (register, ID)

HOW can I vote? (polls, absentee)

HOW can I learn more?

Note: The “5th W” – WHO – is not a part of this plan, as noted under “Rules” above

Existing Message Tactics – To Be Expanded/Enhanced

- **Voter Registrar Communications**
 - Notices of precinct or poll changes
 - Mailed Voter Registration cards
 - Other communications

- **City Social Media Platforms**
 - City and Departmental
 - Rotate Message Elements
 - Boost postings in the final 2 weeks before Election Day
 - Utilize single NextDoor post 2 weeks out and again Monday prior

- **Website**
 - Highlight on Home Page, Calendar, and appropriate department pages

- **Citizen Newsletter - “The Heron Report”**

- **Employee Newsletter - “Team Chesapeake”**

- **Weekly Employee Update emails**

- **Public Services Announcements on Chesapeake Television**
 - Targeted for highest viewership times
 - Co-aired via social media and web

- **News & Information Programming on Chesapeake Television**
 - Chesapeake Weekly – News stories on voting
 - A Closer Look – Interviews with Registrar, others
 - ‘peake Life – How-to videos on voting at polls and absentee (stress ease)

New Message Tactics – Low or No Implementation Costs

- **Message Tool Kit** (camera-ready ads, newsletter copy, social media post text, etc.)
 - Easy use by wide array of groups
 - Civic League for newsletters – Target February to allow time for distribution
 - Faith-based Community for bulletins, newsletters, etc.
 - Business, Fraternal, Civic, and similar groups
 - Any group or organization that reaches citizens can be a message ally

- **City-owned Variable Message Signs (VMS)** – Fixed and Mobile
 - Deploy 2 weeks before Election Day
 - Rotate locations for portable units to highest traffic areas (as appropriate)

- **Direct Point-of-Service Flyers and Reminders**
 - Library circulation (flyer, bookmark, etc.)
 - Community Centers
 - City Customer Service locations (Treasurer, CofRev., Utilities, etc.)
 - Available to community organizations wishing to help promote election

- **Face-to-Face Messaging Opportunities**
 - City events
 - Food Truck events, if active in the appropriate timeframe
 - Staff attend events and/or provide printed materials for distribution

- **School Messaging** – Peach Jar, etc.
 - As available, work with Schools to include message in parent communications
 - Possibly utilize PAS system for a direct call reminder prior to Registration deadline and/or Election Day.

- **Chesapeake Alert** – Opt-in Messages
 - Send reminder to all Opt-in lists just prior to Election Day.

New Message Tactics – Additional Costs Incurred

- **Targeted Online Advertising**
 - Banner ads on Pilotonline.com for month of April (~ \$500)
 - i. Downside – reaches outside the City, no way to segregate
 - Purchase ad space from other, Chesapeake-focused online sites
 - Purchase online ads as part of a “package” deal with paid media (below)
 - Increase Facebook message boosting (costs based on time & reach)

- **Rental Variable Message Signs (VMS) – Mobile**
 - Deploy 2 weeks before Election Day
 - Rental units supplement City-owned signs, when City signs are committed elsewhere and not available in the timeline.

- **Outdoor Signs – 2 parts**
 - Similar to signs currently used by Parks & Recreation, and using the same support poles as those signs, where available
 - Larger “upper” sign carries a generic message that election day is approaching, the importance of voting, etc.
 - Smaller “lower” sign carries the date of the target election
 - Only the “lower” sign would need to be replaced for each election; the “upper” sign can be expected to last for multiple use cycles.

- **Roadside Sign – Similar to the classic “candidate” signs**
 - Promotes election day and the date
 - Date designed in such a way that it can be updated, using an adhesive “snipe” sticker, for subsequent elections.
 - Cost of stickers is projected to be notably less than signs
 - Signs themselves anticipated to last three to four election cycles
 - Need to allow for loss of some signs due to weather, damage, etc.

- **Outdoor Flag (Feather) Signs – Often seen with “Open” or “Sale”**
 - Large, highly visible signs saying “Vote Here Today” or similar
 - To be placed in prominent location adjacent to each polling place

- **Paid Media Purchases**
 - ¼ page, full-color ads in the *Clipper*
 - Potential for online package deal, coupled to print ads

Potential Future Tactics

NOT included in September 2019 Campaign Budget

- **Paid Media Purchases**
 - Additional traditional print advertisements in *Va. Pilot* and/or *Clipper*
 - i. Potential for online package deal, coupled to print ads
 - Advertisements in other local print publications
 - i. *The Shopper*, *The New Journal & Guide*, others
 - Paid article placement in *The Shopper* (costly)
 - Inserts or “Sticky Tab” placements in/on *Virginian-Pilot*
- **Outdoor Advertising**
 - Billboards in high traffic areas (supplemental to VMS locations)
 - Targeted bus signage via HRT and/or Bus Shelter signage
 - i. HRT rules apply; Target bus signs to Chesapeake routes
- **Direct Mail Communications**
 - Postcard mailings to every Chesapeake household with a reminder
 - i. Printing costs reasonably low; Postage costs VERY high
 - Bill messages and/or bill inserts, coordinated through City Treasurer, Commissioner of the Revenue, and/or Real Estate Assessor. Timing would be key, both lead-time for message and the timing of the delivery as it relates to the date of the election.

Campaign Review and Evaluation

While it is difficult to determine the specific impact of a wide-ranging message campaign of this sort, efforts will be made to correlate changes in voter turnout to tactics, particularly in terms of turnout changes per precinct, as a function of message vehicles utilized. Additionally, anecdotal information will be gathered through a variety of channels, to evaluate campaign penetration. This data will be utilized to plan both message content and deployment locations for future campaigns.

A thorough review of campaign materials will be conducted, with appropriate replacements made, prior to the next election cycle.