Overview of Administration of Vermont Elections

Two Basic Types of Elections in Vermont:

1. **Statewide – occur in all towns on the same date, federal offices on ballot.**
2. **Local – annual meetings on first Tue in March (most) and special meetings throughout the year.**

Statewide:

SOS responsible for:

- **Oversight, maintenance, and clerk guidance for all aspects of statewide voter checklist, including My Voter Page service for voters**
- **Ballot creation > receipt of candidate filings from Rep, Senate, and County clerks, creation of approx. 275 different ballot styles (different candidate combinations).**
- **Receipt and review of petitions from Independent candidates and placement of those candidates on GE ballot if accepted.**
- **Receipt and review of candidate nominations from major and minor parties and placement of those candidates on the GE ballot if accepted.**
- **Absentee Ballot envelopes – manage procurement, orders and distribution to 247 towns and cities. Outgoing, Return, and Voted ballot envelopes.**
- **Compliance with federal ballot mailing deadline (45 days before each) > means preparation and distribution of ballots and envelopes to all clerks prior to this date and guidance, instruction, coordination of clerks meeting deadline and reporting to Dept. of Justice. (Production and distribution of all ballots and envelopes 45 days in advance of each statewide election).**

- **Drafting of Warnings and Notice and provision to clerks in time for posting.**

- **Procurement, management, and provision of election systems to clerks including: tabulators, accessible voting system, election management software. Tabulators and AVS require annual maintenance, pre-election programming specific to each of the 275 ballot styles, pre-election testing, post-election results reporting and audits >> all overseen and coordinated by SoS.**

- **Provision of Guidance to clerks on all aspects of election administration. Produce "*Election Procedures Guide*"; conduct bi-annual summer trainings, provide direct support on daily basis by phone and email.**

- **Oversight of absentee ballot tracking system for purposes of reporting to EAC after each election and provision of data to researchers, candidates, campaigns.**

- **Oversee and administer reporting of election results:**

    - **Unofficial results through online system on election night from 247 towns / 275 districts.**
    - **Official returns of vote through system within 48 hours of election.**
    - **Compilation of those results for official canvass meetings at all levels (Rep, Senate, County, statewide, federal) and conducting of statewide canvass.**

- **Oversight and administration of recounts in close coordination with county clerks and superior courts.**
- **Results reporting on federal races to appropriate federal entities and conduct of electoral college votes in presidential election years.**
- **Administration of campaign finance disclosure requirements for all candidates in statewide and local elections – guidance to campaigns, PACs, and parties on disclosure requirements, host online filing system enabling public searches of reports.**

Town Clerks responsible for:

- **Administration of all aspects of the election at the town/city level, including:**
    - **Maintenance of voter checklist.**
    - **Tracking of all absentee ballot activity: requests, issuance, receipt, defective notices and curing.**
    - **Administration of absentee ballot voting by mail, in office, and overseas.**
    - **Conduct of the polling place on election day.**
    - **Reporting of results on election night, reporting of official results within 48 hours, in some cases conduct of the canvass for official certification of state rep races.**

Local:

SOS responsible for:

- **Guidance to town and city clerks on compliance with local election laws.**
- **Assistance coordinating programming of tabulators and creation of ballots where necessary.**
- **Advocacy in legislature regarding laws relating to local election admin.**

Town Clerks responsible for (everything):

- **Posting of notices and warnings for all stages of election.**
- **Creation of ballots and procurement of envelopes for absentee balloting.**

- **Administering and tracking progress of all absentee ballots.**
- **Operation of the polling place on election day.**
- **Compilation and reporting of results.**
- **Administration of recounts.**

ELECTION TIMELINES

2024 Presidential Primary (town Meeting Day)

- **Major Party Filing Deadline- December 15, 2023**
- **46 days prior ballots ready: January 19, 2024**
- **Warning Posting: 30 days before.**
- **Election Day: March 5, 2024 (Town Meeting Day)**

August Primary Dates 2024

- **First day for all candidates to file: April 22, 2024**
- **Last day for Major Party Candidates to File: May 30, 2024**
- **46 Days prior (UOCAVA deadline and ballots): Friday June 28th, 2024 (Saturday is the 45th day)**
- **Primary Election Day: August 13**
- **Official Results due to SOS: August 15 (48 hours after the election)**
- **Canvass for single town reps (day after): August 14**
- **Canvass of Senate and Multi-Town Reps (Friday after)- August 16**
- **Canvass of Statewide offices (one week after) : August 20, 2024**

November General Election 2024

- **Last Day for Independent Candidates to file (Friday before): August 9th, 2024**
- **Last day for Minor Party Nominations (Friday Before): August 9, 2024**
- **Last day for Major party justice of the peace (Friday after): August 16, 2024**
- **Last day for Major party to file for failure to nominate in primary (6 days after the primary): August 19, 2024**
- **Last day for a candidate to withdraw: August 23, 2024**
- **Last day for Major party to replace withdrawn candidate: August 30, 2024 (7 days after the withdrawal)**
- **46 days prior (UOCAVA mailing deadline): September 21, 2024**
- **Mailing of ballots must start by: September 23, 2024 (43 days prior)**
- **Deadline to complete mailing: October 1, 2024**

- **General Election Day: November 5, 2024**
- **Official Return of Votes due to SOS (48 hours after): November 7, 2024**
- **Certification of election, all offices (one week after): November 12, 2024**
- **General Election Audit (w/in 30 days): no later than December 5, 2024**

Local: Town Meeting Day and special elections

- **Candidate petitions (6th Monday prior (Australian ballot only)): January 29, 2024**
- **Voter backed petitions (47 days prior): January 18, 2024**
- **Posting of Warning (30-40 days prior): January 25-February 4, 2024**
- **Ballots ready (20 days prior, may be mailed to all voters no later than this date): February 14, 2024**

BALLOT MAILINGS:

Universal Mailing of Ballots to all active registered voters – meaning ballots are automatically mailed to all registered voters in advance without the need for a request – is **only required by the law for the General Election.**

- **Secretary of States office conducts the mailing. Must occur b/w 45 days prior (+/- Sept 20) and October 1.**
- **Ballots mailed to address provided with request, or if none to mailing address on record, or if none, to legal address on record.**
- **Ballots are returned directly to individual clerk's offices (pre-addressed, pre-paid envelope included with every ballot.)**

Local elections – (Act 60)

- **Legislative body of town/city/or village may vote to mail ballots for local elections.**
- **School boards, with approval of each individual legislative body in the district may also mail ballots.**
- **Not available to the municipal entities at this time due to significant administrative complexity that this entails and lack of infrastructure to support it.**
- **Evolution: started with emergency basis in COVID, one-time for GE. Led to highest turnout and highest early vote percentage in history (about 70% and 74% respectively)**
- **Adopted by Act 60 as permanent process for GE. Conducted first under permanent law in 2022. Led to second highest turnout and early vote rate, following only 2020.**

Potential changes:

August Primary – process by which three ballots are sent / lack of party registration / lack of requirement to request particular party.

Local Ballot Mailing in municipal districts: need for clarity of responsibilities for administration, increasing infrastructure and resources in districts for performing tasks, accounting for varying voting methods and results processing methods across towns in districts, commingling of results v. tabulators, ensuring equal access for all voters in the district.

Turnout Statistics for 2020 and 2022 statewide elections:

2020 Primary

Registered voters: 490,018

Dem votes cast: 109,365

Prog votes cast: 941

Republican votes cast: 58,626

Absentee votes counted: 123,301

Total votes counted: 168,932

2020 General

Registered Voters: 506,312

Absentee votes counted: 280,455

Total votes counted: 370,968

2022 Primary

Registered voters: 500,692

Dem votes cast: 102,408

Prog votes cast: 610

Republican votes cast: 30,560

Absentee votes counted: 51,243

Total votes counted: 133,578

2022 General

Registered voters: 506,666

Absentee Votes counted: 191,916

Total Votes counted: 291,955