CITY OF WEST ALLIS
RESOLUTION R-2020-0605

RESOLUTION URGING THE WISCONSIN STATE LEGISLATURE TO ENACT LAWS ALLOWING FOR TIMELY COUNTING OF ABSENTEE BALLOTS DURING THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION ON NOVEMBER 3, 2020

WHEREAS, the presidential elections normally have increased voter turnout and the 2020 election is expected to have record turnout; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a tremendous increase of electors voting absentee to avoid the health risks associated with in-person contact at polling places; and

WHEREAS, with a month to go before the election, the City of West Allis has already received about 12,000 requests for absentee ballots from the more than 34,000 registered voters and expects to ultimately have about 15,000 absentee ballots to process on election day; and

WHEREAS, in order to process an absentee ballot, an election official must follow a specific procedure set forth in state law, which includes 1) entering a poll list number on the poll list next to the name of the elector who voted the ballot, 2) opening the carrier envelope only, and, in such a manner that a member of the public, if he or she desired, could hear, announce the name of the absent elector or the identification serial number of the absent elector if the elector has a confidential listing, 3) verifying that the certification has been properly executed and the applicant is a qualified elector of the ward, 4) entering an indication on the poll list next to the applicant's name indicating an absentee ballot is cast by the elector, 5) opening the envelope containing the ballot in a manner so as not to deface or destroy the certification, 6) taking out the ballot without unfolding it or permitting it to be unfolded or examined, 7) verifying that the ballot has been endorsed by the issuing clerk, 8) checking whether the poll list indicates that proof of residence is required and no proof of residence is enclosed or the name or address on the document that is provided is not the same as the name and address shown on the poll list, 9) marking the poll list number of each elector who casts an absentee ballot on the back of the elector's ballot, 10) depositing the ballot into the proper ballot box, and 11) entering the absent elector's name or poll list number after his or her name on the poll list; and

WHEREAS, it takes even more time to process a ballot that is rejected because a certification is insufficient, the applicant is not a qualified elector in the ward or election district, the ballot envelope is open or has been opened and resealed, that the ballot envelope contains more than one ballot of any one kind, or that the certificate of a military or overseas elector who received an absentee ballot by facsimile transmission or electronic mail is missing, or if proof is submitted to the board of absentee ballot canvassers that an elector voting an absentee ballot has since died; and

WHEREAS, if 15,000 absentee ballots are processed on election day and it takes an average of only 3 minutes to process each ballot from start to finish, it will require 750 work-hours to process all absentee ballots; and

WHEREAS, at the expected staffing level of 15 election officials working 5 voting machines for the West Allis Board of Absentee Ballot Canvassers, the City is limited to processing 300 ballots per hour, meaning it is going to take each of the 15 election officials will have to work 50 hours to process all absentee ballots; and

WHEREAS, it is better to extend the time for counting absentee ballots rather than rushing to process ballots in a manner that increases the risk of error and impacting the integrity of the election results; and

WHEREAS, counting absentee ballots for days after election day increases the perception of fraudulent activity and the uncertainty of election results, but publicly counting absentee ballots prior to election day avoids a delay in announcing election results; and

WHEREAS, there is currently uncertainty as to whether the legal deadline to receive absentee ballots by 8 p.m. will be enforceable, making it unknown whether the clerk will be able to accurately report the true number of absentee ballots that will be processed as the law contemplates;

SECTION 1: <u>**ADOPTION**</u> "R-2020-0605" of the City Of West Allis Municipal Resolutions is hereby *added* as follows:

A D O P T I O N

R-2020-0605*(Added)*

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of West Allis urges the Wisconsin legislature to enact laws specific to the 2020 presidential election held on November 3, 2020, including allowing the public canvassing of absentee ballots to commence prior to election day.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of West Allis urges the Wisconsin legislature to amend the statutes as necessary to ensure that the law requiring absentee ballots to be received by 8 p.m. on election day is enforceable without disenfranchising voters.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that City Clerk is directed to send a copy of this resolution to all of members of the Wisconsin State Legislature, and the Governor of the State of Wisconsin.

PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE CITY OF WEST ALLIS COUNCIL
_____.

	AYE	NAY	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
Ald. Angelito Tenorio	_____	_____	_____	_____
Ald. Vince Vitale	_____	_____	_____	_____
Ald. Tracy Stefanski	_____	_____	_____	_____
Ald. Marty Weigel	_____	_____	_____	_____
Ald. Suzzette Grisham	_____	_____	_____	_____
Ald. Danna Kuehn	_____	_____	_____	_____
Ald. Thomas Lajsic	_____	_____	_____	_____
Ald. Dan Roadt	_____	_____	_____	_____
Ald. Rosalie Reinke	_____	_____	_____	_____
Ald. Kevin Haass	_____	_____	_____	_____

Attest   Presiding Officer

_____   _____
Rebecca Grill, City Clerk, City Of   Dan Devine, Mayor City Of West
West Allis   Allis