

# CITY OF GILLETT

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GOVERNMENT  
ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD

## City of Gillett Resolution No. 21-2009

### City of Gillett Resolution in Opposition to the Early Voting suggestion

WHEREAS, the City of Gillett is in compliance with all State of Wisconsin approved voting system requirements; and

WHEREAS, the State of Wisconsin and City of Gillett have made available for all residents, the ability to cast early votes via the no reason Absentee Ballot; and

WHEREAS, regional districts for early voting throughout the state could disenfranchise elderly voters by forcing them to travel outside their municipality to cast their early ballot; and

WHEREAS, the City of Gillett, as with other municipalities, cannot afford the hiring of poll workers to be present during the proposed early voting period; and

WHEREAS, the public perception in implementing a new voting system could be considered a waste, due to the fact system proposed to be replaced has been used successfully; and

WHEREAS, the State of Wisconsin already has a comprehensive audit program and the federal government should accommodate the unique needs of individual states; and

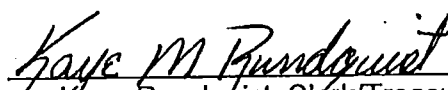
WHEREAS, the early voting suggestions, will put a great deal of burden on local governments to adequately meet the new requirements and security issues as proposed; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Gillett urges the State Government Accountability Board Leaders to oppose the passage of provisions that would provide undo hardships to local governments; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be forwarded to Assemblyman Gary Tauchen and Senator Robert Cowles for their consideration in voting on the proposed bill.

Dated this 2nd day of July, 2009

  
Thomas Lietz, Mayor

  
Kaye Rundquist, Clerk/Treasurer

## City hopes to pilot early voting

By ALAN HAMARI

Posted: Oct. 28, 2009 1:44 p.m.

Brookfield could be one of a handful of municipalities to participate in a trial early voting program for next spring's elections, pending a decision by the state's Government Accountability Board in December.

After the 2008 fall elections, the state started studying early voting, and the Government Accountability Board this summer held a series of listening sessions with county and municipal clerks and members of the public to gather input.

The board is looking at three options: creating regional early voting districts, allowing municipalities to opt into on-site early voting as desired or streamlining the absentee voting process.

In other states, early voting starts anywhere from 45 to 15 days before an election and ends five to three days before the election. The proposal for Wisconsin would be to start early voting 20 days before the election and end it at least three days before the election. Currently, Wisconsin offers absentee voting, which can begin up to 30 days prior to an election and continues until the day prior, and requires an application for a ballot. Early voting would not have such a requirement.

Brookfield City Clerk Kris Schmidt said part of the reason the city volunteered for a pilot program was because Brookfield dealt with so many absentee ballots during the 2008 election.

Nearly 9,000 Brookfield voters cast absentee ballots, with about 2,000 of those coming in the Friday and Monday before the election, Schmidt said. That means extra work for poll workers who would usually be focusing on Election Day duties.

"I do think that we really need to take a look at some changes," Schmidt said.

She would like to see the deadline for absentee voting pushed back to the Thursday before Election Day, giving clerks more time to process ballots and reducing concerns about potential problems.

"It's not about fraud, it's about errors," she said. "When you back up your (ballots) to the two days before election, you're going to have errors."

Still, Schmidt said, the only two races that ever would cause a deluge of absentee ballots are the races for governor and president.

The GAB will make a recommendation about early voting in December.



**Board of Election Commissioners**

**Commissioners**  
Stephanie Findley  
David H. Redemann  
Robert F. Spindell, Jr.

**Executive Director**  
Susan M. Edman

September 23, 2009

Kevin J. Kennedy  
Director & General Counsel  
Wisconsin Government Accountability Board  
212 East Wisconsin Avenue, Third Floor  
P.O. Box 7984  
Madison, WI 53707

Dear Kevin,

In a letter dated November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008, Mayor Barrett wrote to you calling for the adoption of true early voting. Recently, the GAB has held statewide public hearings and the consensus from municipal clerks, as well as from the Milwaukee Election Commission, has been that while there are benefits to implementing true early voting, the required cost to upgrade vote tabulating technology exceeds these benefits.

The City of Milwaukee, however, believes that it remains critical to make reforms to the current in-person absentee ballot voting process in order to ensure accuracy and cost efficiency in future elections. These reforms will expand access and opportunities for citizens to exercise their right to vote, while providing municipalities with more cost-efficient and manageable systems for administering absentee voting. These suggested election reform measures include:

1. Allowing municipalities to operate additional satellite in-person absentee ballot locations. Under Wis. Stat. s. 6.855(1), municipalities are only allowed to have one satellite location to accommodate the demand for in-person absentee voting. During high turnout elections, such as last November's Presidential election, we witnessed wait times of three hours or longer at the Zeidler Municipal Building satellite location. Providing municipalities with the authority to establish additional satellite locations would provide voters with greater accessibility to community-based voting and reduce wait times.
2. Eliminating the use of Certificate Envelopes (Form GAB-122) for in-person absentee voters. These envelopes are costly, confusing to the elector, and are duplicative to information already secured by the absentee ballot application. Rather, an in-person absentee voter's ballot could be placed directly into locked

3. ballot boxes and stored until pre-election sorting and the tabulation of ballots on Election Day. This would streamline the absentee voting process and significantly reduce associated costs.
4. Change the deadline for in-person absentee voting from the Monday preceding the election to the Thursday preceding the election. This change would ensure sufficient time for clerks to record all in-person absentee voters in the Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS) and to prepare ballots for processing on Election Day. This change to the deadline for in-person absentee voting should include an allowable exception for people with valid unforeseen circumstances that may otherwise prevent them from voting on Election Day.
5. Allow election officials to review (for completeness) and open the certificate envelopes of mail-in absentee voters and to sort all absentee ballots (including by-mail and in-person) during the period after the close of in-person absentee voting and prior to Election Day. This process should require appropriate public notice and be open to the public. This would ensure that clerks have sufficient time to record most absentee voters in SVRS (so that a notation appears in poll books that the elector has already voted) and prepare ballots for processing.
6. Change the first day for in-person absentee voting so that it coincides with the close of registration (20 days prior to each election). This change would create a uniform proof of residency identification requirement for anyone registering to vote and simultaneously voting an in-person absentee ballot. It would also allow clerks sufficient time to organize ballots prior to the start of in-person absentee voting.
7. Lastly, I ask that the deadline for applying for a by-mail absentee ballot be moved ahead two days, from the current Thursday before the election to the Tuesday (one week prior) before Election Day. Currently, the Milwaukee Election Commission receives hundreds of returned absentee ballots after an election. This change would provide a more plausible amount of time for a municipality to mail a ballot and, of greatest importance, for the elector to vote and return their ballot prior to the election.

I am proud of the historic participation of City of Milwaukee residents in elections. I believe that an adoption of the reforms listed above will improve accessibility for voters to participate in the electoral process, and will provide municipalities with the systems needed to effectively and efficiently administer elections.

Sincerely,



Sue Edman  
Executive Director  
City of Milwaukee Election Commission