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**March 31, 2020**

In order to conduct the election safely and efficiently, the City of Waukesha made a substantial effort to encourage voters to Vote Absentee by Mail. Currently, 36% of registered voters have requested a mailed ballot or voted in-person absentee. We are still strongly encouraging all voters to Vote Absentee by Mail. This is the safest method to cast your ballot in this year's election. You can request an absentee ballot online: <https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/>

By comparison during the last presidential primary, 6% of voters cast absentee ballots (majority in-person) and 53% voted at the polls on election day.

The decision to consolidate our election location to one location stemmed from several factors. In addition to a dramatic reduction in poll workers, we have also lost the majority of our Election Chiefs due to concerns about potential exposure. These are the people who have run each polling location, with many doing so for several years. As previously noted many of our election workers are those in the highest risk categories for substantial health impacts from COVID-19.

Additionally, many of Waukesha's poll locations are located in Fire Stations, as well as local churches. Some churches had indicated they prefer us not to run our election in those locations this year due to public health concerns. We also determined that it would not be prudent to use Fire Stations to conduct our election as our Firefighter/Paramedics are currently on the front lines of responding to the COVID-19 health crisis. These first responders are currently regularly coming into contact with patients that have the symptoms of the COVID-19 infection, or have confirmed cases of COVID-19. From a public health standpoint, it does not make sense to utilize fire stations as polling locations and potentially expose more of our population to the virus.

Lastly, we will be able to more effectively deploy our resources to one location to ensure a facility that is designed to protect public health. We have several measures that will be taken at the Schuetze Recreation Center in order to ensure a sanitary environment and reduce the chances the infection will be spread from one person to another. Among other items, voters will be spaced out at appropriate distances, workers will be provided personal protective equipment, and voting stations will be set up to limit the poll workers contact with members of public. In addition, voting will be spaced out in various rooms throughout the building.

The City is not requesting volunteers for this election, as we would prefer to deploy current City employees to assist with managing the voting location.

