

**CITY OF ALBANY
CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
STAFF REPORT**

Agenda Date: 06/07/10

Reviewed by: BP

SUBJECT: Report on the cost of the 2008 Election and Number of Candidates
for the past three (3) elections

REPORT BY: Jacqueline L. Bucholz, City Clerk

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Information only.

BACKGROUND

On May 3, 2010, Council Member Thomsen put an item on the Council agenda regarding public financing of campaigns.

In 2009, the City Council received a report from the Ad Hoc Committee on Campaign Finance Reform. During the research the Committee discovered that the taxpayers of Albany have been financing candidates through the General Fund above the approximate \$80 that the City charges for printing the Candidate Statement. The statement subsidy is for all Albany elected positions, which are City Council, Board of Education, City Attorney, and City Treasurer.

The Candidate Statement is optional and not mandated and gives the candidate the opportunity to highlight education and qualifications to the voters, which is then printed in the sample ballot and sent to all registered voters.

The City currently charges a Candidate \$89.50 for the printing of the Candidate Statement, however, the actual cost that the City is charged by the County is \$650.00, which generally goes up each election cycle. I can verify that the City has been charging a nominal fee since 1975 and believe it has always been supplemented by the City. The fee charged to candidates remained constant at \$75 until the City began increasing it by the change in the Consumer Price Index approximately 8 years ago in an effort to partially capture the increases enacted by the County.

The City Council at the May 3, 2010 meeting directed the City Clerk to come back to Council with a report on the cost of the 2008 election and to go back three elections and report how many candidates ran in each election. The Council also invited the School Board to comment on the City subsidy of the statements for candidates to the Board.

The Albany Board of Education discussed this issue at its meeting of May 18, and did not feel prepared to make an official Board statement, but offered their individual comments:

- Concern about Albany voters being able to run and not having financial barriers to doing so
- It is not difficult for candidates to raise the \$600 cost for the candidate statement and it is not prohibitive to running
- An expenditure limit is preferable to revenue regulations
- If the expenditure limit is low, like, \$1,000, then paying \$600 for a candidate statement is unworkable
- Philosophically public financing is preferable to campaign regulation
- \$.70 per registered voter expenditure limit is not too restrictive if there is going to be a limit
- Why does the County charge so much for the candidate statement?
- Please no more paperwork for candidates to have to file other than the State forms

DISCUSSION

In the 2008 election, the City paid \$20,919.43 for its election. This included the County consolidation fee of \$7,470.40 and the rest of the cost was for printing, translations, typesetting, mailing, advertising and supplies.

In 2004, there were three Council seats, with six candidates; Two Board of Education seats, with three candidates and one City Treasurer seat with one candidate. Total candidates: 10

In 2006, there were two Council seats, with 4 candidates; three Board of Education seats, with four candidates and one City Attorney seat with one candidate. Total candidates: 9

In 2008, there were three Council seats, with six candidates; two Board of Education seats, with three candidates and one City Treasurer seat, with one candidate. Total candidates: 10

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

N/A

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The City is subsidizing the candidates by approximately \$560.50 and if that is multiplied by 10 candidates the cost would be \$5,605.