

Introduced by: Council Members
 Carrington and Hanson
 Introduced: March 8, 2016
 First Public Hearing: March 22, 2016
 Second Public Hearing: April 12, 2016
 Action: Failed
 Vote: 3-4

Yes:	No:
Carrington	Best
Hanson	Combs
Johnson	DeVries
	LaFrance

CITY OF PALMER, ALASKA

Ordinance No. 16-009

An Ordinance of the Palmer City Council Amending Palmer Municipal Code Section 2.04.021 Composition

THE CITY OF PALMER, ALASKA ORDAINS:

Section 1. Classification. This ordinance shall be permanent in nature and shall be incorporated into the Palmer Municipal Code.

Section 2. Severability. If any provision of this ordinance or any application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of this ordinance and the application to other persons or circumstances shall not be affected thereby.

Section 3. Section 2.04.021 is hereby amended to read as follows (new language is underlined and deleted language is stricken):

2.04.021 Composition.

The city council is composed of one mayor and six council members. Council members shall file for ~~who are~~ and be elected at large to seats designated as A, B, C, D, E, and F.

Section 4. Effective Date. Ordinance 16-009 shall take effect upon adoption by the Palmer City Council.

ORDINANCE FAILED BY A 3-4 VOTE

Ordinance No. 16-009: Amending Palmer Municipal Code Section 2.04.021 Composition (IM 16-017)
 Description and Justification by Councilman Steve Carrington

The basic change to the election code is adding designated seats.

The code phrase will read "Council members will be elected at large to designated seats."

This will use seat's A through F to designate individual seats that are at large. This means that all city voters will still vote for all city council seats. This is the same procedure that is used to elect council members in Wasilla and for the MSB School District seats. It does NOT create districts for district voting.

Looking at the last 12 years of election that are available at the city's website, www.cityofpalmer.org shows a significantly higher voter participation when there are clearly defined choices.

For instance, there were 4 mayoral elections in the last 12 years. The two with only one candidate on the ballot had 80% and 86% votes of the total counted ballots. In the two elections that had more than one candidate on the ballot, participation for the mayoral votes was 96% and 97%.

Mayor Race

Year	% of votes cast	Total Mayor	Total cast	Total voters
2004	86%	680	795	3501
2007	80%	580	723	3598
2010	96%	848	882	3886
2013	97%	738	761	3872

Then if we look at the years that there were ballot propositions, the percentages average at 95% for Proposition A and drop to an average of 85% for Proposition B and an average of 82% when there is a Proposition C.

Proposition Voting

Year	Total voters	Total cast	% cast	Prop A	% cast	Prop B	% cast	Prop C
2004	3501	795	97%	770	79%	631		
2005	3509	744	91%	680	94%	701		
2006	3550	736						
2007	3598	723	96%	696	80%	582	82%	594
2008	3696	518	95%	493	99%	511		
2009	3793	725						
2010	3886	882						
2011	3855	527	98%	517				
2012	3965	852	90%	771				
2013	3872	761						
2014	3982	517	92%	474	92%	477		
2015	4141	715	97%	692				

Average 95% 89% 82%

But where we had the top 2 votes get in, the participation averages 65% with a range from 70% down to 53% of the total counted votes.

Whether voters are choosing to only cast one vote or are missing the part of voting for two candidates, we won't really know unless we try another system. This is why I am proposing we have At-Large Designated seats for council voting.

Council Seat Voting

Year	Total voters	Total cast	% cast	Total Council
2004	3501	795	70%	559
2005	3509	744	59%	443
2006	3550	736	68%	504
2007	3598	723	69%	499
2008	3696	518	58%	300
2009	3793	725	60%	433
2010	3886	882	62%	548
2011	3855	527	69%	361
2012	3965	852	53%	455
2013	3872	761	66%	500
2014	3982	517	71%	367
2015	4141	715	69%	494

Average 65%

For all the numbers used for these tables I used the "Total Properly Cast Ballots" and the Total Registered Voters number. For the number of votes cast I used the Total Votes for all candidates for an office or seat and included the Write Ins.