

Introduced by: Mayor Mark Springer
Date: March 12, 2024
Public Hearing: March 26, 2024
Action: Passed
Vote: 5-0

CITY OF BETHEL

Resolution # 24-04

SUPPORTING CHANGING THE PRECINCT LOCATION FOR BETHEL PRECINCT NO. 1 FROM THE LOWER KUSKOKWIM SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD ROOM TO THE YUPIIT PICIRYARAIT CULTURAL CENTER

- WHEREAS,** the City of Bethel and City's Election Board volunteers prioritize effective management of City Elections and want to ensure Bethel voters have the opportunity to cast a meaningful ballot;
- WHEREAS,** Bethel currently has two precincts: Precinct No.1 at the Lower Kuskowkim School District Office, 1004 Ron Edward memorial Dr., and Precinct No.2 at the Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center, 401 Chief Eddie Hoffman Highway;
- WHEREAS,** after evaluating prior elections and future election needs, the Election Board is recommending the City and State relocate the polling location for Precinct No.1 to the Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center, so that Precinct No.1 and Precinct No.2 will operate within the same building;
- WHEREAS,** consolidating the location of both precincts will provide:
- Improved parking:** because the District Office parking is shared with school staff, there are very few parking spaces available for voters. There are more parking spaces available at the Cultural Center.
- Improved access for people with disabilities:** the District Office has a ramp at the back of the building, but parking and access to the ramp is difficult. The Cultural Center has a ramp at the main entrance.
- Improved ingress and egress to the poll:** the poll location at the District Office Board Room has one door used as the entrance and exit, which causes congestion. The Cultural Center has multiple interior doors for entering and exiting, and larger hallways to accommodate lines.
- Larger more flexible space:** the Board Room is set up to accommodate Lower Kuskowkim School District Board meetings with many tables and chairs, which makes setting up the voting booths difficult, especially for

Introduced by: Mayor Mark Springer
Date: March 12, 2024
Public Hearing: March 26, 2024
Action: Passed
Vote: 5-0

older volunteers. The Cultural Center is a large open space for flexible poll setup.

More election officials at one location: Finding election officials to work on Election Day is becoming harder, at times resulting in too few officials to respond to voter needs or assist with technical questions or actions. Consolidating the polls to one location will increase precinct security and staff available to manage election needs.

Less confusion for voters: Every year, several voters are unsure of where to go on Election Day. A single polling location will reduce voter confusion.

Fewer questioned voters: The process to administer a questioned ballot may take the poll worker and the voter approximately five times as long to complete as a regular ballot and involves the voter filling out a form (often two forms; one per election ballot). Voting a regular ballot does not require the voter to fill out paperwork to receive a ballot. Many Precinct No.1 voters prefer to vote at the Cultural Center, which results in a high number of questioned ballots at Precinct No.2. (see table) Voting at the wrong precinct is inconvenient and confusing for the voter and requires more staff time to process.

	Number of Questioned Voters	
	Precinct No.1	Precinct No.2
2023	2	21
2022	7	34
2021	3	11
2020	5	31
2019	26	106
2018	18	41
2017	15	47

Secure space away from students: due to growing security concerns, many states have stopped using schools as election precinct locations. Some states require or encourage schools to be closed on Election Day.

WHEREAS, if Precinct No.1 moves to the Yupiit Piciryarait Culteral Center, 401 Chief Eddie Hoffman Highway, there will still be two district precincts, but they would be voting from the same location;

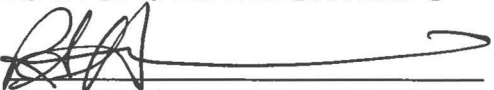
WHEREAS, Alaska Statute 15.10.020 authorizes the Division of Elections Director to modify the boundary of a precinct and to establish or abolish precinct and polling places in the state;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BETHEL the Bethel City Council directs the City Clerk's Office to work with the Division

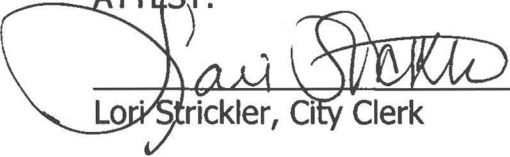
Introduced by: Mayor Mark Springer
Date: March 12, 2024
Public Hearing: March 26, 2024
Action: Passed
Vote: 5-0

of Elections to move Precinct No.1, located at the Lower Kuskowkim School District Office, 1004 Ron Edward memorial Dr., to the Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center, 401 Chief Eddie Hoffman Highway.

ENACTED THIS 26th DAY OF MARCH 2024 BY A VOTE OF 5 IN FAVOR AND 0 OPPOSED.


Rose Henderson, Mayor Pro Tem

ATTEST:


Lori Strickler, City Clerk