



**Filing Deadlines**

**Mayor, Commissioners, Neighborhood Council Representatives, and Municipal Court Judges**

First date April 20, 2023

Last date June 19, 2023

**Fees**

Mayor \$56.16

Commissioners \$37.44

Neighborhood Councils \$0

Municipal Court Judge Department A \$1,284.15

Municipal Court Judge Department B \$1,070.12

**Election Dates**

Primary Election  
(if election administrator determines that a

September 12, 2023

primary election needs to be held)

General Election November 7, 2023

**Declaration for Nomination and Oath of Candidacy Forms**

Prior to running for office, a nomination form **must** be completed, signed in the presence of a Notary Public or an officer of the Cascade County Election Office, and returned to the Cascade County Election Office during the filing period. The forms are available at the Cascade County Election Office, and on the City of Great Falls' website at:

<https://greatfallsmt.net/citycommission/municipal-elections>

**Location of Election Administrator**

Cascade County Election Office  
325 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North  
Courthouse Annex, Room 100  
Great Falls, MT 59401  
(406) 454-6803  
[elections@cascadecountymt.gov](mailto:elections@cascadecountymt.gov)

**City Commission-Composition**

The City Commission shall be composed of five voting members: four city commissioners and the mayor. The city commission shall be the legislative and policy-making body of the City of Great Falls.

**Duties and Responsibilities**

- Adopt policies and procedures and enact ordinances and resolutions as necessary for the proper execution of governmental functions and responsibilities.
- Appoint and supervise, and may remove, the city manager.
- Adopt an annual budget, levy taxes and special assessments, and may borrow money and issue bonds subject to Montana law. Appropriations, exclusive of bond and loan indebtedness, shall not exceed anticipated revenue.
- Adopt procedures for contracting with private and public agencies.
- Appoint citizens to boards, councils, committees or any other body or group pursuant to law.
- Set the salary of the city commissioners and the mayor by ordinance.

**City Commission Vacancies**

- (1) Mayor for a two-year term
- (2) City Commissioners for four-year terms
- Elections for City Commissioners and for the Mayor shall be non-partisan.
- City Commissioners and the Mayor shall be nominated and elected at large.

City Commissioners and the Mayor shall take office the first Tuesday after January 1<sup>st</sup> in the year following the election.

**The Mayor - Election of the Mayor**

The mayor shall be elected for a term of two years. The mayor shall meet all requirements and qualifications for election to the office of city

commissioner. Mayoral candidates shall be qualified electors in the City of Great Falls, be at least 21 years old, be a resident of Montana for at least three years, and be a resident of Great Falls for at least two years preceding the election.

#### Powers and Duties of the Mayor

- The mayor shall be recognized as the official head and representative of the City of Great Falls for the purpose of presiding at city commission meetings and the performance of ceremonial functions. These functions shall not be construed as conferring upon the mayor executive, personnel, or administrative powers or functions.
- The mayor shall serve as a member of the commission with all the rights and privileges of city commissioners. The mayor shall possess no veto over actions taken by the city commission.

#### ***City Commissioners - Election***

City Commissioner candidates shall be qualified electors of the City of Great Falls, and be residents of Great Falls for at least 60 days preceding the election.

#### ***Citizen Involvement***

The City Commission may establish and appoint persons to boards, councils, committees, commissions, and other bodies of an advisory or substantive nature to assist the Commission in the exercise of its duties. The City of Great Falls encourages citizens to participate in these bodies by serving as members, attending meetings, or other similar methods.

#### ***Neighborhood Councils***

In 1996, the citizens of Great Falls approved an amendment to the Great Falls City Charter reinstating a neighborhood council program. In 1997, the Great Falls City Commission adopted Ordinance 2727 providing for the establishment, organization and operation of the councils, as well as the establishment of a neighborhood liaison function known as the Neighborhood Council Coordinator that is now under the direction of the City Manager's Office.

- Purpose: The councils shall act in an advisory capacity to the City Commission, the City Manager and to other City advisory bodies, and may contribute information, opinions, advice, suggestions and recommendations to the City Commission, City Manager and other City advisory bodies on all governmental affairs and services having an effect on the area the neighborhood council represents, including, but not limited to, public finance, public works, public safety, planning and zoning, and public health and sanitation.
- Neighborhood Districts - Composition of Councils, Election: There are nine (9) neighborhood council districts within the City of Great Falls. The residents of a district shall comprise the electorate for that district. Each district shall have a council comprised of five (5) members, elected to a two (2) year term at the election held in conjunction with the City's general election. Nominees for election to a neighborhood council must be residents of their designated neighborhood district, and must be qualified electors.

#### ***Write-In Candidate Information***

The deadline for write-in candidates to file a Declaration of Intent for the Primary Election is 5:00 PM, July 10, 2023, and 5:00 PM on September 5, 2023 for the General Election. When a person files a write-in candidate form with the Election Administrator, their name is not on the ballot. They have the responsibility of getting their name out to the public. However, the write-in candidate has the opportunity to write their name as many ways as possible on the form that they think someone would write their name in on the ballots (eg Jim Smith, James Smith, Jimmy Smith). Declared write-in candidate votes take precedence over undeclared write-in candidate votes.

The deadline for successful primary and general election write-in nominees to file a written Declaration of Acceptance with the Election Administrator is within 10 days of the official canvass. If an individual fails to comply with the requirements of Mont. Code Ann. § 13-15-111, the individual may not assume the position for which elected.

#### ***Open Government***

Records of the City Commission, Neighborhood Councils, and all boards, councils, committees, and commissions of the City, shall be open to the public as provided by Montana law. All meetings of such bodies shall be publicly announced in advance and shall be open to the public as provided by Montana law.

### ***Municipal Court Judges***

- The Municipal Court Judge candidates shall have the same qualifications as a judge of the district court as set forth in Article VII, Section 9, of the Montana Constitution, except a municipal court judge need only be admitted, and in good standing, to the practice of law in Montana for at least three years prior to the date of the election.
- A municipal court judge shall be a resident of Cascade County one year preceding the election, and be a resident and qualified elector in the City of Great Falls at the time of his or her appointment or election.
- Further, a municipal court judge shall become certified as provided in Mont. Code Ann. §§ 3-1-1502 and 3-1-1503, to assume the functions of that office.
- **NEW** this election: There shall be two (2) Municipal Court Judges.
- The existing Municipal Court Judge position shall be designated Municipal Court Department A and shall be subject to its already existing four (4) year general election cycle.
- The new Municipal Court Judge position shall be designated Municipal Court Department B and is subject to an initial two (2) year term. Thereafter, Municipal Court Department B shall be subject to the four (4) year general election cycle commencing in November of 2025.

### ***Political Signs***

- Sign Permit – Election related political signs are exempt from the sign permit requirement. However, signage must be in compliance with City Codes in all other respects.
- Size – Political signs may be no larger than 16 sq. feet in area and four (4) feet in height.
- Time – Signs may be placed no earlier than 60 days prior to any election. Signs must be removed within seven consecutive days after an election. When a primary election is held in September, successful candidates may leave signs up through the November general election.
- Where/Setbacks – Signage may be placed on private property with the owner’s permission. The sign must be placed at least 12 feet from the back of the curb. Vehicular and pedestrian sight distances must be unobstructed. Signage is not allowed on public property, in City boulevards, on boulevard trees, utility poles, street lights or signs, traffic poles or other public property.

### ***Oaths of Office/Swearing In Ceremony***

A swearing in ceremony will be arranged for the newly elected officers to take their respective oath of office as set forth in the Montana

Constitution prior to entering upon the duties of each office.

***Additional election/campaign information can be found at:***

**Cascade County Election Administrator:**  
<https://www.cascadecountymt.gov/205/Elections>

Sandra Merchant  
Cascade County Election Administrator  
325 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North  
Courthouse Annex, Room 100  
Great Falls, MT 59401  
(406) 454-6803

**Montana Secretary of State:**  
<https://sosmt.gov/elections/>

Secretary of State  
Christi Jacobsen  
State Capitol Building  
1301 E. 6th Avenue, Rm 260  
Helena, MT 59601  
Phone: (406) 444-2034  
Election help desk: (406) 444-9608

**Montana Commissioner of Political Practices:**  
<http://politicalpractices.mt.gov/>  
Commissioner of Political Practices  
Chris Gallus  
1205 8th Ave  
P.O. Box 202401  
Helena, MT 59620-2401  
(406) 444-2942  
Email: [cpphelp@mt.gov](mailto:cpphelp@mt.gov)

Email: [cppcompliance@mt.gov](mailto:cppcompliance@mt.gov)

**City of Great Falls (City Commission):**

<https://greatfallsmt.net/citycommission/municipal-elections>

Lisa Kunz, City Clerk  
2 Park Drive South  
Civic Center, Room 204  
Great Falls, MT 59401  
(406) 455-8451

**City of Great Falls (Neighborhood Councils):**

<https://greatfallsmt.net/neighborhoodcouncils>

Lanni Klasner, Communications Specialist  
(Neighborhood Council Coordinator)  
2 Park Drive South  
Civic Center, Room 5  
Great Falls, MT 59401  
(406) 455-8496