



# CITY OF ST. PETERSBURG

## 2024 City Election Handbook

Released 12/21/23



## CONTENTS

<b>Revision History .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>1. Background.....</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 City Offices Up for Election in 2024 .....	4
1.2 Election Structure and Dates .....	4
1.3 Purpose and Use of This Handbook .....	5
1.4 State Resources .....	6
1.5 County Resources.....	6
1.6 City Resources .....	7
1.7 Requests for Public Records and Information.....	7
1.8 Election-Related Complaints .....	8
<b>2. Campaign Financing .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>3. Glossary of Terms.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>4. Becoming a Candidate .....</b>	<b>10</b>
4.1 Personal Qualifications .....	10
4.2 Qualifying Fee or Petitions .....	11
4.3 Qualification Period and Process.....	13
4.4 Financial Disclosure Forms.....	16
4.5 Write-in Candidates .....	17
<b>5. Statement of Solicitation .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>6. Prohibited Acts.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>7. Campaign Treasurers .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>8. Campaign Depositories .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>9. Contributions .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>10. Expenditures .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>11. Electioneering Communications .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>12. Political Advertising.....</b>	<b>20</b>
12.1 Municipal Seal and Other City-Owned Trademarks.....	20
12.2 City Sign Code.....	20
<b>13. Other Disclaimers .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>14. Fund Raisers .....</b>	<b>23</b>

<b>15. Text Message or Telephone Solicitation .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>16. Filing Campaign Reports.....</b>	<b>23</b>
16.1 Where to File .....	24
16.2 When to File.....	24
<b>17. Termination Report .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>18. Reporting for Individuals Seeking a Publicly Elected Position on a Party Executive Committee .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>19. Electronic Filing of Campaign Reports.....</b>	<b>25</b>
19.1 Deadlines and Penalties in State Handbook.....	25
19.2 City Electronic Filing System .....	26
<b>20. Office Accounts .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>21. Carryover Campaign Funds.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>22. Recordkeeping .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>23. Recordkeeping Tips .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>24. Florida Elections Commission .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Appendix A Legal Reference and Rules Cited.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Appendix B Frequently Asked Questions .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Appendix C Deadlines for Accepting Contributions.....</b>	<b>31</b>

## REVISION HISTORY

<b>Change No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Affected Sections</b>	<b>Date Released</b>
23.1	Initial version released.	All	12/21/23

## 1. BACKGROUND

### 1.1 City Offices Up for Election in 2024

Pursuant to the St. Petersburg City Charter (the “**City Charter**”) and the St. Petersburg City Code (the “**City Code**”), the following offices will be up for election during the 2024 municipal election cycle:

- Council Member for District 1
- Council Member for District 3
- Council Member for District 5
- Council Member for District 7

The term of each office will begin on Thursday, January 2, 2025, and continue for a term of approximately four years.

### 1.2 Election Structure and Dates

Although Council Members are ultimately elected through a city-wide general election and thus represent the entire City, that city-wide general election is preceded by a primary election limited to voters within the applicable City Council district in a process that can be generally described as follows:

- The primary election is held ten weeks prior to the general election. Only electors residing within a City Council district may vote in the primary for that district, and the two candidates from a district who receive the highest number of votes move on to the general election.
- The general election is held on the first Tuesday following the first Monday in November, in conjunction with various federal, state, and county general elections. Unlike the primary election, the general election for each district is open to *all* electors in the City, and the candidate receiving the most votes is elected as the Council Member from that district.

Exceptions to that process occur in the following situations:

- If only *two* candidates qualify for a particular district, no primary election is held for that district, and those two candidates appear only on the general election ballot for Citywide election, as described above.
- If only *one* candidate qualifies for a particular district, that candidate is deemed elected as the Council Member from that district without participating in a primary or general election.

The dates for those elections in 2024 are as follows:

- Primary election .....August 20, 2024
- General election..... November 5, 2024

[City Charter §§ 3.02, 5.05; City Code § 10-2]

### 1.3 Purpose and Use of This Handbook

Although certain aspects of City elections (e.g., qualifications and qualifying dates) are governed by the City Charter and the City Code, the majority of the rules governing the conduct of City elections are found in state law—primarily Florida Statutes chapters 97–106 (the “**Florida Election Code**”) and in Florida Statutes chapter 112, part III (the “**Florida Ethics Code**”).

The Florida Division of Elections is authorized to interpret and apply the Florida Election Code and publishes a variety of publications for that purpose. The Division of Elections publication most relevant to a candidate for City elected office is the 2024 Candidate & Campaign Treasurer Handbook (the “**State Handbook**”). Accordingly, this City handbook mirrors the organizational structure of the State Handbook so that the two documents can be read in tandem. For example:

- In both handbooks, chapter 2 is entitled “Campaign Financing.” Because chapter 2 of this handbook indicates that there are no local applicable local requirements, a candidate may focus solely on that chapter of the State Handbook.
- In both handbooks, chapter 4 is entitled “Becoming a Candidate.” Chapter 4 of the State Handbook explains the statutory framework for qualification, and chapter 4 of this handbook explains how that statutory process is implemented by the City Charter and City Code. Accordingly, a candidate must read both chapters *together*.

Like the State Handbook, this handbook is not a substitute for the City Charter, the City Code, or any other applicable City policy, and those sources of authority should be reviewed in their entirety for complete information regarding the regulation of candidates in a City election. A listing of the specific authorities cited in this handbook can be found in Appendix A.

#### **1.4 State Resources**

Questions on interpretation and enforcement of state law should be directed toward the applicable state agency, including the Division of Elections, the Florida Elections Commission, the Florida Commission on Ethics, and the recently created Office of Election Crimes and Security. More information on the purview of each of these agencies is available on their respective websites, along with advisory opinions, orders, and other relevant information:

- Division of Elections: <https://dos.myflorida.com/elections/>
- Elections Commission: <http://www.fec.state.fl.us/>
- Commission on Ethics: <https://www.ethics.state.fl.us/>
- Office of Election Crimes and Security: <https://dos.fl.gov/elections/integrity>

In particular, candidates are advised to review the listing of publications and forms from the Division of Elections on a regular basis to ensure that candidates are using the most up-to-date guidance and forms. The specific URLs for those publications and forms are as follows:

- Publications: <https://dos.fl.gov/elections/forms-publications/publicationsreports/>
- Forms: <https://dos.myflorida.com/elections/forms-publications/forms/>

#### **1.5 County Resources**

The Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections (the “SOE”) is responsible for administering the voting process for City Elections. More information is available at the following location:

- SOE website: <https://www.votepinellas.com/>



## 1.6 City Resources

The following online resources provide information on City elections and local campaign finance regulation, including the most up-to-date version of this handbook:

- City elections home page: <http://www.stpete.org/elections/>
- City EFS (see chapter 19): <https://cityofstpetersburgfl.easyvotecampaignfinance.com/>

## 1.7 Requests for Public Records and Information

The following policies and procedures for responding to requests for information from candidates will be in effect for the duration of the campaign. Any questions regarding this information should be directed to either Chan Srinivasa, City Clerk, at 727-893-7202 or Patty Beliveau, Assistant City Clerk, Manager, at 893-7131.

- There is currently a policy which prohibits unauthorized personnel from riding with paramedics. This policy will continue in effect for candidates as well.
- Should a candidate contact a fire station directly, the candidate will be referred to the supervisor on duty at the time and the supervisor will report the contact(s) to Fire Headquarters and Ms. Beliveau should then be advised of the contact. The supervisors will be provided with the list of candidate names.
- When requested, the Police Department will make available to all candidates those statistics and reports which are normally kept on file. This information should be requested through Patty Beliveau, City Clerk's Office.
- If a record is already available online for free, a candidate will be charged for printing a hard copy of that record. Otherwise, a candidate will not be charged for printing a hard copy of requested records.
- For any information requiring special data processing runs, including Police information which is not ordinarily on file, requests will be processed through Patty Beliveau and the candidates will be required to pay upfront for the cost of the run. A turnaround time of one week will be allowed for its production. The costs to the candidates will include any data processing charges as well as the cost for manpower to interpret the information when necessary. This policy shall apply to incumbents as well as other candidates and shall apply only when the material is other than that normally distributed to City Council.

- Candidates will on occasion request information which requires extensive research. Time in excess of one man-hour is considered extensive and the candidates should pay the cost of that research in addition to any and all computer resources outlined in the preceding bullet. This policy shall apply only when the requested material is other than that normally distributed to City Council.

## **1.8 Election-Related Complaints**

As the “filing officer” for City elections, the City Clerk administers the qualification process and the filing of campaign finance reports. But state law makes clear that the City Clerk’s role is ministerial in nature. Accordingly, the City Clerk has no authority to evaluate the accuracy of information submitted on qualifying paperwork or campaign finance reports; nor does the City Clerk have any authority to investigate alleged violations of campaign regulations.

[Fla. Stat. §§ 99.061(7)(c);  
Div. Elect. Op. DE 11-05]

Accordingly, complaints related to a City election should be directed to the applicable state agency. The authority of each such agency can be generally described as follows:

- Allegations of irregularities or fraud involving voter registration, voting, or candidate petition activities may be reported to the Division of Elections.

[Fla. Stat. § 97.012(15)]

- Alleged violations of certain provisions of Florida Statutes chapter 104 (false or malicious charges or representations) or to any provision of Florida Statutes chapter 106 (campaign finance) may be reported to the Elections Commission.

[Fla. Stat. §§ 104.271(2),  
104.2715(2), 106.25(2)]

- Alleged violations related to the candidate financial disclosures may be reported to the Commissions on Ethics.

[Fla. Stat. § 112.324]

- Alleged violations of the Florida Election Code or any rule adopted pursuant thereto and any election irregularities may be reported to the Office of Election Crimes and Security.

[Fla. Stat. § 97.022]

More information on each of these agencies can be found in section 1.4, above.

## 2. CAMPAIGN FINANCING

There are no local regulations related to this chapter of the State Handbook.

## 3. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following terms are used in this handbook and supplement those used in the State Handbook:

**Announcement period:** The period of time preceding the pre-qualifying period and the qualifying period. See section 4.3(b).

**Campaign finance reports:** Reports of campaign finance activity that must be filed pursuant to the Florida Election Code. See chapter 16.

**City Charter:** The St. Petersburg City Charter. See chapter 1.

**City Clerk:** The City officer responsible for administering qualification and other aspects of City elections. See section 4.3(a).

**City Code:** The St. Petersburg City Code. See chapter 1.

**Division of Elections:** Florida Division of Elections. See section 1.4.

**efdms:** The electronic filing system for filing financial disclosure forms with the Ethics Commission. See section 4.4.

**EFS:** The electronic filing system for filing campaign finance reports with the City. See chapter 19.

**Ethics Commission:** The Florida Commission on Ethics. See sections 1.4, 1.8, and 4.4.

**Filing Officer:** The St. Petersburg City Clerk is the filing officer for all City elections. See section 4.3(a).

**Financial disclosure:** Disclosure of personal financial information required under the Florida Ethics Code and the Florida Election Code. See section 4.4.

**Florida Election Code:** Florida Statutes chapters 97–106.

**Florida Ethics Code:** Florida Statutes chapter 112, part III.

**Pre-qualifying period:** The two-week period of time preceding the qualifying period. See section 4.3(b).

**Qualifying period:** The two-week period in which qualification occurs. See section 4.3(b).

**Sign Code:** City Code provisions that regulate signage in the City. See section 12.2.

**SOE:** The Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections. See section 1.5.

## **4. BECOMING A CANDIDATE**

This chapter addresses the specific requirements for becoming a candidate for Council Member, including (4.1) personal qualifications; (4.2) qualifying fee or petitions; (4.3) required forms and other items; and (4.4) financial disclosure forms. The chapter concludes with (4.5) a summary of how the standard qualification process is modified for a write-in candidate.

### **4.1 Personal Qualifications**

To qualify as a candidate for Council Member, a person must satisfy requirements related to (a) voter registration; (b) residency; and (c) political party positions.

#### **(a) Voter Registration**

To qualify as a candidate for Council Member, a person must be an “elector of the City of St. Petersburg,” which means that the person must be currently registered to vote based on residency within St. Petersburg.

[Fla. Stat. § 99.021(16);  
City Charter §§ 5.01, 5.04(a)(1)C]

**(b) Residency**

To qualify as a candidate for Council Member, a person must maintain continuous residency in the applicable City Council district for the 12-month period preceding the date of the primary election and then, if declared a primary nominee, through the date of the general election. Any candidate who fails to maintain those residency requirements during the election period is disqualified as a candidate.

Residency requirements continue to apply during the term of office, and any Council Member who fails to maintain the residency required when elected becomes ineligible to hold that office.<sup>1</sup>

[City Charter § 5.04(a)(2)-(3)]

Accordingly, to qualify for as a candidate for Council Member in the 2024 election cycle, a person must have established residency in the applicable Council district no later than August 21, 2023. Then, if elected, residency within that district must be maintained through the end of the Council Member’s term in January 2029.

**(c) Political Party Positions**

To qualify as a candidate for City elected office, a person must not be a candidate, nominee, or representative of any political party or any committee or convention representing or acting for any political party.

[City Charter § 5.04(a)(1)C]

**4.2 Qualifying Fee or Petitions**

Unless running as a write-in candidate (as discussed in section 4.5), qualification requires either (a) payment of a qualifying fee or (b) submission of qualifying petitions.

---

<sup>1</sup> The only exception to these residency requirements applies to a situation in which district boundaries are changed during the term of office—a situation that is not likely to occur during the term of any Council Member elected in 2024.

**(a) Qualifying Fee**

There are two components to the qualifying fee for a City election—the "filing fee" set by the City and the "election assessment" set by the State:

- The City filing fee is \$150 for a candidate for Council Member. This fee must be paid by each candidate and is retained by the City to offset expenses incurred in running the election.
- The state election assessment is 1% of the annual salary of the office for which the candidate is qualifying. A candidate may have the election assessment waived by submitting an Affidavit of Undue Burden (form DS-DE 19A) during the qualifying process; otherwise, each assessment collected by the City is remitted to the Florida Ethics Commission.

The applicable qualifying fee must be paid with a single paper check that is drawn on the candidate's campaign account.<sup>2</sup> Other types of checks or forms of payment will not be accepted for qualifying purposes. Pursuant to state law, a qualifying fee may be refunded only if a candidate withdraws before the last date to qualify.

[Fla. Stat. §§ 99.061(7)(a)1, 99.092, 99.093;  
City Charter § 5.04(a)(1)D.1]

Qualifying fee amounts for the 2024 City election cycle are as follows:

<b>Office</b>	<b>City Filing Fee</b>	<b>State Election Assessment</b>	<b>Total Amount</b>
Council Member	\$150.00	\$565.50	\$715.50
Mayor	N/A	N/A	N/A

---

<sup>2</sup> Consult subsection 4.3, below, for more information on the timing of this payment and the actions that must be taken prior to opening a campaign account.

## **(b) Qualifying Petitions**

As an alternative to paying the qualifying fee described in the preceding subsection, a prospective candidate may submit qualifying petitions in accordance with the following:

- To qualify as a candidate for City Council, a person must submit at least 500 petitions, with each petition signed by a person who was an elector residing within the applicable Council district at the time of signature.
- To qualify as a candidate for Mayor, a person must submit at least 1,000 petitions, with each petition signed by a person who was an elector residing within the City at the time of signature.

Consult the Division of Elections publication entitled “2024 Candidate Petition Handbook” for more information on qualifying as a candidate through the petition process, keeping in mind the following local procedures:

- The City uses Division of Elections form DS-DE 104 for qualifying petitions.
- Petitions must be submitted to the City Clerk prior to noon on the 28<sup>th</sup> day preceding the start of qualifying, and the City Clerk will transfer those petitions to the SOE for processing in accordance with state law. For the 2024 election cycle, the deadline for submission of qualifying petitions to the City Clerk is May 7, 2024.

[Fla. Stat. §§ 99.092, 99.095;  
City Charter § 5.04(a)(1)D.2.]

## **4.3 Qualification Period and Process**

### **(a) City Clerk / Filing Officer**

The City Clerk is responsible for administering the City’s elections and serves as the “filing officer” for state law purposes.

[Fla. Stat. § 106.011(11);  
City Charter § 5.04(a)(1)]

The Office of the City Clerk is located on the first floor of the St. Petersburg City Hall, at the following address:

The City Clerk  
175 5th St. N.  
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

All qualification paperwork and other election-related materials must be hand-delivered to the City Clerk unless otherwise provided in this handbook.

**(b) Announcement, Pre-Qualifying, and Qualifying Periods**

The qualification process can be divided into three distinct periods of time, which are generally described below, in reverse chronological order:

- The “**qualifying period**” is the two-week period in which the City Clerk accepts filing of all qualification paperwork and administers the qualifying process. The qualifying period for City elections begins 11 weeks before the primary election and ends 9 weeks before the primary election.
- The “**pre-qualifying period**” is the two-week period that precedes the qualifying period. During the pre-qualifying period, the City Clerk may accept all qualification paperwork but will hold that paperwork for filing during the qualifying period.
- The “**announcement period**” is the period of time that precedes the pre-qualifying period. During the announcement period, candidates may announce their intent to run for office and may file a limited subset of qualifying paperwork with the City Clerk. Submission of qualifying petitions also occurs during this period.

[Fla. Stat. § 99.061(8);  
City Charter § 5.04(a)(1)A.; City Code § 10-7]



Unless running as a write-in candidate (as discussed in section 4.5), the specific dates and times for these periods during the 2024 municipal election cycle are follows:

<b>Period</b>	<b>Begins</b>	<b>Ends</b>
Announcement	Immediately	May 21, 2024, at 8:00 a.m.
Pre-qualifying	May 21, 2024, at 8:00 a.m.	June 4, 2024, at 8:00 a.m.
Qualification	June 4, 2024, at 8:00 a.m.	June 18, 2024, at 5:00 p.m.

**(c) Required Forms and Other Items**

To qualify as a candidate, the forms and other items identified below must be filed with the City Clerk before the end of the qualifying period, with specific procedural and timing requirements identified below, as applicable. Failure to strictly observe applicable filing requirements will prevent qualification.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Type of Filing</b>	<b>Specific Timing Issues</b>
<b>Items That May or Must be Submitted During Announcement Period</b>		
Qualifying Petitions (if applicable)	Original paper forms submitted to City Clerk, to be transferred to the SOE for verification.	Prior to noon on the 28th day preceding the start of qualifying (May 7, 2024)
Appointment of Campaign Treasurer and Designation of Campaign Depository for Candidates (Form DS-DE 9)	Original paper form submitted to City Clerk.	Before opening a campaign account.
Statement of Candidate (Form DS-DE 84)	Original paper form submitted to City Clerk.	No more than 10 days after filing DS-DE 9.
Acknowledgment of Electronic Filing Information	Original paper form submitted to City Clerk.	Prior to submitting any required campaign finance reports. See section 16.
<b>Items That May be Submitted Only During Pre-qualifying or Qualification Periods</b>		
Qualifying Fee (if applicable)	Paper check meeting requirements in section 4.2 submitted to City Clerk.	Qualifying Fee cannot be submitted until after Form DS-DE 9 is filed.

Item	Type of Filing	Specific Timing Issues
Full and Public Disclosure of Financial Interests (Form 6)	See section 4.4.	See section 4.4.
Candidate Oath Nonpartisan Office (Form DS-DE 302NP)	Original paper form submitted to City Clerk.	N/A
Affidavit to accompany Application to qualify as a 2024 St. Petersburg City Council Candidate	Original paper form submitted to City Clerk.	N/A

**4.4 Financial Disclosure Forms**

**(a) Form Required for Qualification**

As part of the qualification process, a prospective candidate for Council Member must make a “full and public disclosure of financial interests” by filing an Ethics Commission Form 6 in accordance with the following:

- If the person seeking to qualify has *already* filed a Form 6 with the Ethics Commission as part of an annual filing requirement for 2023 (e.g., a current Council Member running for reelection), the qualifying paperwork filed with the City Clerk must include a copy of either (i) the form filed with the Ethics Commission or (ii) the verification or receipt of electronic filing for that form.
- Otherwise, the person seeking to qualify must file a Form 6 for 2023 with the Ethics Commission as discussed in subsection (b), below, and then include a copy of that form with the qualifying paperwork submitted to the City Clerk.

[Fla. Stat. §§ 99.061(5), 112.3144(1)]

**(b) Filing with the Commission on Ethics**

Original financial disclosure forms must be filed electronically with the Ethics Commission through its Electronic Financial Disclosure Management System (“EFDMS”).<sup>3</sup> More information on accessing this system is available at <https://disclosure.floridaethics.gov/>.

[Fla. Stat. §§ 99.061(5), 112.3144(2), 112.31445]

Because access to EFDMS can be acquired only through a multi-step process administered by the Ethics Commission, a prospective candidate should begin that process as soon as possible to ensure sufficient time is available to obtain access to EFDMS, complete filing of information, and obtain a copy of the report that must be submitted to the City Clerk with the qualification paperwork.

**Applicable law does not permit extension of the qualifying period to accommodate a prospective candidate who failed to begin the process of filing financial disclosure with the Ethics Commission in a timely manner.**

**4.5 Write-in Candidates**

The requirements described in the preceding subsections of this chapter 4 are modified for a “write-in” candidate as follows:

- A write-in candidate's name will not be printed on the ballot.
- The name provided on the candidate oath form submitted by a write-in candidate is the name that voters must write on the ballot when voting for that candidate, and only write-in votes cast for a person who has qualified as a write-in candidate will be counted and canvassed.

---

<sup>3</sup> For previous City elections, the required financial disclosure forms could be prepared using paper forms promulgated by the Ethics Commission, but effective January 1, 2024, state law requires the Form 6 to be filed electronically, with a prohibition on paper forms.

- A write-in candidate's name will not be included on the list of candidates published by the City prior to the election.
- A write-in candidate is subject to specific requirements for political advertising, as discussed in the State Handbook.
- A person qualifying as a write-in candidate is not required to submit the qualifying fee or the petitions discussed in subsection 4.2.
- With respect to the qualifying period discussed in subsection 4.3, qualification for write-in candidates begins at noon of the first day of the qualifying period and ends at noon on the last day of the qualifying period.

[Fla. Stat. §§ 99.0215(1), 99.061(4); 106.143  
City Charter § 5.04(c)]

## **5. STATEMENT OF SOLICITATION**

State Handbook chapter 5 concerns regulations applicable to candidates for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, members of the Cabinet, and the state legislature. Accordingly, this chapter of the State Handbook does not apply to candidates for City elected office, and there are no local regulations related to this chapter of the State Handbook.

## **6. PROHIBITED ACTS**

There are no local regulations related to the provisions of the Florida Election Code that are addressed in State Handbook chapter 6.

With respect to the Florida Ethics Code, various provisions apply to candidates, including the following:

No public officer . . . or candidate for nomination or election shall solicit or accept anything of value to the recipient, including a gift, loan, reward, promise of future employment, favor, or service, based upon any understanding that the vote, official

action, or judgment of the public officer . . . or candidate would be influenced thereby.

[Fla. Stat. § 112.313(2)]

Candidates should consult publications from the Ethics Commission for more information on provisions of the Ethics Code that apply to candidates and officeholders.

## **7. CAMPAIGN TREASURERS**

There are no local regulations related to this chapter of the State Handbook.

## **8. CAMPAIGN DEPOSITORIES**

There are no local regulations related to this chapter of the State Handbook.

## **9. CONTRIBUTIONS**

There are no local regulations related to this chapter of the State Handbook.

## **10. EXPENDITURES**

There are no local regulations related to this chapter of the State Handbook.

## **11. ELECTIONEERING COMMUNICATIONS**

There are no local regulations directly related to this chapter of the State Handbook; but see the information in chapter 12, which applies equally to political advertising and to electioneering communications.

## **12. POLITICAL ADVERTISING**

### **12.1 Municipal Seal and Other City-Owned Trademarks**

The City's official municipal seal and any other City-owned trademarks, including the barred pelican logo, may be used only by City employees in the performance of their official duties or by third parties with express written permission of the City. The City does not grant approval of its municipal seal or other trademarks for campaign purposes, and any use of the City's municipal seal or other logos for campaign purposes is a violation of the City's trademark protections and will be addressed as such.

### **12.2 City Sign Code**

City signage regulations are codified in City Code section 16.40.120 (the "**Sign Code**"), which regulates signage in a content-neutral manner, as required by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Accordingly, there are no requirements or exemptions in the Sign Code that are specific to campaign-related signage.

This section addresses the following categories of City regulation most likely to apply to campaign signage: (a) temporary signage on single family or multifamily residential use of four units or less; (b) temporary signage at a business; and (c) snipe signs and other prohibited signage. The section concludes with (d) information on how to obtain guidance on interpreting the Sign Code and (e) the statutory obligation to remove signage.

#### **(a) Temporary Signage on Single Family or Multifamily Residential Use of Four Units or Less**

Campaign signage may be placed in front of residential properties on a temporary basis in accordance with the following:

Up to five temporary signs shall be allowed on any lot where a single family or multifamily residential use of four units or less exists provided that such signs are located on private property and not within the visibility triangle at an intersection. Such signs shall be no more than four square feet and six feet in height or such smaller size if the size of the specific sign is limited by this subsection. Such signs shall not be illuminated. Such signs shall not be allowed to remain in a damaged condition or disrepair, including peeling or faded sign faces.

As noted in the introduction to this section, City sign regulations are content-neutral. Accordingly, the five-sign limit in the regulation described above applies to *all* signage on a particular residential lot—regardless of whether that signage is campaign-related or not. So, for example, a residence with three campaign signs and two non-campaign signs would have the maximum number of allowable signs (i.e., the Sign Code does not allow for five campaign signs *and* five non-campaign signs).

[City Code § 16.40.120.10]

### **(b) Temporary Signs at a Commercial Use**

Several types of temporary signs that may be available to be placed by candidates at commercial uses. Some examples include freestanding signs, banners, wind feathers, and A-frames. Regardless of the type, all temporary signage at a commercial use requires a temporary sign permit obtained from the Planning and Zoning Department.

The allowable size and duration of display of temporary signs differs depending on which sign type is being used. For commonly used freestanding signs, the maximum display time is 30 days per permit. Each commercial use may obtain up to four temporary sign permits per calendar year per site. As a result, the maximum allowable duration of a freestanding temporary sign would typically be 120 days.

More information on the permitting process for temporary signs can be found on the Planning and Zoning Department webpage by searching for documents related “Temporary Signs.” The URL for that page is as follows:

[https://www.stpete.org/business/planning\\_zoning/zoning.php](https://www.stpete.org/business/planning_zoning/zoning.php).

As noted in the introduction to this section, City sign regulations are content-neutral. Accordingly, the regulations described above apply to *all* temporary signs at a particular commercial use—regardless of whether that signage is campaign-related. So, for example, if a business had already obtained two permits in 2024 for a temporary sign that was *not* related to a campaign, only two additional permits would be available for the remainder of 2024 to use for a campaign-related temporary sign.

[City Code § 16.40.120.7]

**(c) Snipe Signs and Other Prohibited Signage**

The Sign Code prohibits a variety of specific types of signage, including “snipe signs,” which are defined as follows:

*Snipe sign* means a sign which is tacked, nailed, posted, pasted, glued, or otherwise attached to a tree, pole, fence, public bench, street light pole, or other object, or on any public property or within the right-of-way.

Illegal snipe signs are given a 24-hour notice for removal. Any snipe sign remaining after the 24-hour notice has expired may be removed by the City and destroyed. Candidates are advised that City Code provides that “[t]he person . . . who . . . is advertised or identified on the sign shall be presumed to have permitted the placement of the snipe sign in the absence of evidence to the contrary.” A municipal ordinance violation may be issued for *each sign removed*, and the fine for each violation of this type is currently \$143.

Snipe signs are not the only form of prohibited form of Signage, and candidates are advised to consult the entire Sign Code to ensure that all forms of campaign signage are compliant. Additionally, candidates are advised that prohibitions in the Sign Code are usually based on at least one defined term. Accordingly, a full understanding of a signage prohibition requires an understanding of the prohibition *and* each defined term used in that prohibition.

[City Code §§ 16.40.120.4; 16.40.120.11]

**(d) Sign Code Guidance**

The City’s Planning and Development Review Services Department is responsible for interpreting the Sign Code and is available to provide guidance on specific signage issues in person or by email:

Planning & Zoning Counter  
Municipal Services Center  
1 Fourth Street North, St. Petersburg, FL 33701  
[devrev@stpete.org](mailto:devrev@stpete.org)

As noted in subsection 1.3, above, this handbook is intended to serve only as a reference guide, and the City’s regulation of signage is ultimately regulated by applicable provisions of the Sign Code, which should be reviewed in its entirety.



**(e) Statutory Obligation to Remove Signage**

State law requires candidates to make a good faith effort to remove all political campaign advertisements within 30 days after:

- Withdrawal of his or her candidacy;
- Having been eliminated as a candidate; or
- Being elected to office.

If political campaign advertisements are not removed within the specified period, the City is authorized to remove such advertisements and may charge the candidate the actual cost for such removal.

[Fla. Stat. § 106.1435]

**13. OTHER DISCLAIMERS**

There are no local regulations related to this chapter of the State Handbook.

**14. FUND RAISERS**

There are no local regulations related to this chapter of the State Handbook.

**15. TEXT MESSAGE OR TELEPHONE SOLICITATION**

There are no local regulations related to this chapter of the State Handbook.

**16. FILING CAMPAIGN REPORTS**

This chapter addresses (16.1) *where* to file campaign finance reports for a City election and (16.2) *when* to file those reports. All other aspects of campaign finance reporting are covered by chapter 16 of the State Handbook, including the content of each report.

## 16.1 Where to File

Campaign finance reports for the election of Council Members must be filed with the City Clerk through the City’s electronic filing system, as more particularly described in chapter 19.

[Fla. Stat. §§ 106.07, 106.0705;  
City Council res. 2016-541]

## 16.2 When to File

The general requirements for determining the specific dates for quarterly, weekly, and daily campaign finance reports are summarized in this chapter of the State Handbook. As applied to the dates for the 2024 City elections, the specific schedule for filing these campaign finance reports is as follows:

Report	Code	Covered Period	Due Date
Quarterly	Q3-23	July 1 – September 30, 2023	October 10, 2023
Quarterly	Q4-23	October 1 – December 31, 2023	January 10, 2024
Quarterly	Q1-24	January 1 – March 31, 2024	April 10, 2024
60th Day	P1-24	April 1 – June 14, 2024	June 21, 2024
46th Day	P2-24	June 15 – June 28, 2024	July 5, 2024
32nd Day	P3-24	June 29 – July 12, 2024	July 19, 2024
25th Day	P4-24	July 13 – July 19, 2024	July 26, 2024
18th Day	P5-24	July 20 – July 26, 2024	August 2, 2024
11th Day	P6-24	July 27 – August 2, 2024	August 9, 2024
4th Day	P7-24	August 3 – August 15, 2024	August 16, 2024
60th Day	G1-24	August 16 – August 31, 2024	September 6, 2024
46th Day	G2-24	September 1- September 13, 2024	September 20, 2024
32nd Day	G3-24	September 14 – September 27, 2024	October 4, 2024
25th Day	G4-24	September 28 – October 4, 2024	October 11, 2024

<b>Report</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Covered Period</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
18th Day	G5-24	October 5, 2024 - October 11, 2024	October 18, 2024
11th Day	G6-24	October 12 - October 18, 2024	October 25, 2024
4th Day	G7-24	October 19 - October 31, 2024	November 1, 2024
TR- May	TRM-24	May 1- August 1, 2024	August 1, 2024
TR-June	TRJ-24	June 1 - August 30, 2024	August 30, 2024
TR- Primary	TRP-24	August 16 - November 14, 2024	November 14, 2024
TR- General	TRG-24	November 1 - January 30, 2025	January 30, 2025

[Fla. Stat. § 106.07]

## **17. TERMINATION REPORT**

There are no local regulations related to this chapter of the State Handbook. Termination reports must be filed in the same manner as other campaign finance reports, through the City's EFS, as more particularly described in chapter 19, below.

## **18. REPORTING FOR INDIVIDUALS SEEKING A PUBLICLY ELECTED POSITION ON A PARTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

There are no local regulations related to this chapter of the State Handbook.

## **19. ELECTRONIC FILING OF CAMPAIGN REPORTS**

### **19.1 Deadlines and Penalties in State Handbook**

The following information in this chapter of the State Handbook apply to candidates for Council Member:

- Deadlines for filing campaign finance reports (midnight at the end of the applicable due date)

- Penalties for late filing of those reports (pursuant to Florida Statutes section 106.07).

Otherwise, this chapter of the State Handbook is concerned with procedural requirements for accessing the *state's* electronic filing system, which is *not* used by candidates for City Office.

[Fla. Stat. §§ 106.07, 106.0705;  
City Council res. 2016-541]

## **19.2 City Electronic Filing System**

Campaign finance reports for a candidate for Council Member must be filed through the City's electronic campaign finance system (the "**City EFS**"), which is available at the following URL:

<https://cityofstpetersburgfl.easyvotecampaignfinance.com/home/publicfilings>

Candidates and campaign treasurers will receive credentials to access and use the City EFS as part of the qualifying process and will receive training and instructional materials at that time, including a City EFS handbook.

## **20. OFFICE ACCOUNTS**

There are no local regulations related to this chapter of the State Handbook.

## **21. CARRYOVER CAMPAIGN FUNDS**

There are no local regulations related to this chapter of the State Handbook.

## **22. RECORDKEEPING**

There are no local regulations related to this chapter of the State Handbook.

## **23. RECORDKEEPING TIPS**

There are no local regulations related to this chapter of the State Handbook.

## **24. FLORIDA ELECTIONS COMMISSION**

There are no local regulations related to this chapter of the State Handbook.

## APPENDIX A LEGAL REFERENCE AND RULES CITED

### 1. Florida Statutes

As described in chapter 1, regulation of City elections is primarily controlled by state law, and this handbook contains numerous references to provisions of the Florida Statutes (available at <http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/>). The specific sections cited in this handbook are as follows:

- [97.012](#) Secretary of State as chief election officer.
- [97.022](#) Office of Election Crimes and Security; creation; purpose and duties.
- [99.021](#) Form of candidate oath.
- [99.0215](#) Name of candidate.
- [99.061](#) Method of qualifying for nomination or election to federal, state, county, or district office.
- [99.092](#) Qualifying fee of candidate; notification of Department of State.
- [99.093](#) Municipal candidates; election assessment.
- [99.095](#) Petition process in lieu of a qualifying fee and party assessment.
- [104.271](#) False or malicious charges against, or false statements about, opposing candidates; penalty.
- [104.2715](#) False representations of military service; penalty.
- [106.011](#) Definitions.
- [106.07](#) Reports; certification and filing.
- [106.0705](#) Electronic filing of campaign treasurer's reports.
- [106.143](#) Political advertisements circulated prior to election; requirements.
- [106.1435](#) Usage and removal of political campaign advertisements.

- [106.25](#) Reports of alleged violations to Florida Elections Commission; disposition of findings
- [112.313](#) Standards of conduct for public officers, employees of agencies, and local government attorneys.
- [112.324](#) Procedures on complaints of violations and referrals; public records and meeting exemptions.

## **2. City Charter and City Code**

The St. Petersburg City Charter and St. Petersburg City Code are available in their entirety at: [https://library.municode.com/fl/st.\\_petersburg/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances](https://library.municode.com/fl/st._petersburg/codes/code_of_ordinances). Specific provisions cited in this handbook are as follows:

### **(a) City Charter**

- [3.02](#) Election and terms.
- [5.01](#) Electors.
- [5.04](#) Qualification and eligibility.
- [5.05](#) Elections.

### **(b) City Code**

- [10-2](#) Scheduling and conducting elections.
- [10-7](#) Petitions for nomination, availability of forms, time period for filing an application.
- [16.40.120](#) Sign Code, Generally
- [16.40.120.4](#) Definitions
- [16.40.120.7](#) Temporary Signs
- [16.40.120.10](#) Exempt Signs
- [16.40.120.11](#) Prohibited Signs

## **APPENDIX B FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**1. Can I qualify as a candidate for Council Member for a particular district because I own a business or rental property within that district?**

No. As discussed in section 4.1(b), qualification is based on “continuous residency” within a district. Owning a business or rental property within a district is insufficient to qualify—even if a person sleeps there occasionally.

**2. If the City owes me money, can I request that the qualifying fee be waived?**

No. As discussed in section 4.2(a), the qualifying fee must be paid by a check drawn on the candidate’s campaign account.



**APPENDIX C**  
**DEADLINES FOR ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTIONS**

City elected offices fall under “Other Offices” in State Handbook Appendix C.



[THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK]