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## Municipal Elections Coming Soon

Thomas Jefferson is quoted as having said “The government closest to the people serves the people best.” I’ve heard a number of variations of that quote over the past few years, but the point remains the same, it’s the local municipal governments that serve the people best with essential city services and governing through locally elected officials.

Murray City is just one of ten cities statewide, and one of six in Salt Lake County, governed by the mayor-council form of government, formerly known as the “strong mayor” form of government. In this form, the city government is divided into two branches, legislative and executive, much like the state and federal governments. The mayor is the chief executive officer of the city and has no vote on the council. The mayor can take part in council meeting discussions and give advice to the council. The council is limited to legislative matters only and council members are limited to being legislators only. In this form of government, the mayor has a veto which can be overridden by a two-thirds vote of the council. The mayor is a full-time position and council members are part-time legislators.

The roles and responsibilities of elected and appointed officials can be confusing, especially to the lay person. The roles of mayor, council members, planning commission members, and advisory board members are all defined by state statutes and local ordinances.

I regularly hear from residents who want to be more involved in the city, and many of our residents have been appointed to serve on a board or commission. I also hear from residents offering suggestions, comments, and criticisms and it is interesting to hear so many differing perspectives. Many ideas and suggestions conflict with those of others, and at the end of the day, the people who have been elected to make decisions must step up and make them in accordance with established laws and ordinances.

City elected offices are for a four-year term. Every two years there is a municipal election cycle when half of the elected offices are up for a vote in Murray. Two years ago, the odd number council districts (1, 3, and 5) were up for election and this year the even number council districts (2 and 4) and the mayor will be elected. This is a great opportunity for those who live in Districts 2 and 4 to be part of the decisions that impact the city by running for city council, and for any resident of the city to run for mayor.

I encourage anyone who meets the qualifications to consider running for office, or at least become involved in the election campaign of someone you can support. Qualifications for candidacy can be found on the Murray City website on the City Recorder page. Being an elected official is not easy, but it is

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<sup>1</sup>Powers & Duties Handbook for Utah Municipal Officials 2020 ed. & Utah Code Title 10.



rewarding, and offers an opportunity to be involved in making the decisions that govern the city.

The dates for filing a declaration of candidacy for the 2021 election are June 1 – 7, and can be filed at the office of the city recorder in Murray City hall. If a primary election is needed, it will be on August 10 and the general election will be held on November 2, 2021. Municipal races in Utah are non-partisan.

If you are not sure in what council district you reside, you can refer to the council district map from the Murray City website ([murray.utah.gov](http://murray.utah.gov)) and selecting Government -> District Maps.