

# Guidance for County Council Elections

## Suggestions for Selecting Nominees, Holding County Council Elections and Securing Appointed Members to the Council

### I. Suggestions for Selecting Nominees

#### A. Possible methods of securing nominees:

1. Analyze racial, sexual, social and economic makeup of the council and compare with the community to determine appropriate representation.
2. The entire council makes nominations at a regular meeting.
3. District nominating committees are appointed by the council. These may be composed of council members, non-council members or both.
4. A county nominating committee is appointed composed of council members, non-council members or both.
5. Each district holds a nominating meeting attended by that district's council members. Leaders in the district are invited to the meeting (extension and non-extension). Diversity and interest are encouraged in selecting nominees. A nominee list from the meeting is returned to full council for follow-up.
6. Other nominee sources might be:
  - a. Organized service club members;
  - b. Local alumni from various institutions;
  - c. Local business and institution leaders; and
  - d. Various other community leaders in and out of organized groups (P.T.A, League of Women Voters, etc.).

#### B. Appointed Nominees

For those appointed members whose terms expire each year, the local extension council is responsible for contacting the organization for appointments. These include MFA Inc., Farm Bureau, National Farmers Organization and the Grange. A list of counties eligible to appoint members from these organizations will be supplied. Extension staff and council members should not contact state offices of eligible organizations. The local council is responsible for contacting the county commission and city or cities eligible to appoint members. In making contacts to secure appointed members, efforts should be made to stress University of Missouri Extension's equal opportunity responsibilities.

A form letter (Exhibit X) is attached, which your council may wish to use for contacting the four local farm organizations after you are notified of your county organization's eligibility to appoint someone.

## II. Suggestions for Holding Elections

The county extension council decides on the election method used. It is recommended in the County Extension Manual that a ballot box be maintained in all county offices during election week. However, an election study has shown that use of mailed ballots increases participation. Decisions regarding the method for conducting the elections should give all eligible citizens an equal opportunity to vote.

### A. Election held at public polling place

NOTE: The county clerk normally will be able to answer any technical election questions.

1. Select polling place or places.
2. State date and hours polls will be open. This should be the same hours as all other regular elections (normally 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.). All counties are encouraged to consider the third Tuesday of January.
3. Publicize reasons for election and procedures.
4. Select persons to conduct the election. Provide instructions and ballots to them.
5. Register individuals voting at polling places (Exhibit VII).
6. Persons in charge at each polling place should count ballots and certify results for that poll. Results should be transmitted to the extension center.

### B. Election by mail-in ballot

1. Prepare up-to-date mailing list.
2. Develop instructions and ballots (see Exhibit IV and V).
3. Set date for mailing and mail.
4. Determine and publicize how and where a ballot may be obtained if a voter has not received a ballot.
5. Be sure you have clearly stated date and place ballot is to be returned.
6. County University of Missouri Extension council is to receive, count and record mail-in ballots.
7. Since there may be difficulty with post office canceling machines, the ballots should be returned as post cards or in envelopes. Do not use folded sheets or paper without envelopes.
8. Through news media, remind voters of final date for returning mail-in ballots. This should be done one week before the final date. (Exhibit IX)
9. The penalty mailing privilege cannot be used to conduct the election. See your local postal authorities for regulations and rates for bulk mailing.

### C. Election by Meeting(s)

1. Set date, place for election meeting or meetings and publicize.
2. Prepare ballots and instructions and develop a program for election meeting.
3. Select a chairman and a secretary for each meeting.
4. Hold district or countywide election. Be sure to keep minutes.
5. Have eligible voters register. Voting should be done by ballot only.
6. Certify election.

### III. Time Schedule (alter to fit your needs)

This schedule is based upon your council election being held on the third Tuesday in January.

- A. November and December - Select nominees, at least two for each elected position and secure nominee's approval.
- B. December - Check names with organizations appointing to avoid duplication and ensure eligibility to serve.
- C. December - In early December, publish list of nominees at least once in public news media. This will conform to the "not more than 50 days or less than 30 days" clause in the legislative act. This must be a legal notice. Local newspaper editors can help here. (Exhibit I)
- D. December and January - Publicize election by giving date, time and place. (Exhibit XIII, XIV, XV and XVI)
- E. January (after election) - Notify elected and appointed members of date, time and place of annual organization meeting and election of council officers. (Exhibit XI)
- F. February - Hold annual meeting of the council to organize, elect officers and set dates of council meetings. All officers of the council shall within five (5) days after their election, take and sign the usual oath of public office, which shall be filed with the county clerk. This may be done at the organization or annual meeting. Complete, print, and submit the electronic (web version) of Certificate of Membership and Officers Form UMca C204.
- G. March 1 - New council takes office.
- H. March - Conduct area training conference for newly elected council members and officers.

## Suggestions for publicizing your council election

### I. Planning Ahead

- A. In October and early November, council chairman should begin discussions on how to organize and publicize the January election.
- B. A council committee may be appointed to develop a written plan (what is to be done; who will take the lead; when it will be done; etc.) or the chairman and county program director may want to develop a plan of action to present to the council.

### II. Publicizing the Election

- A. An "action committee" may be set up in each county to acquaint the people with the nominees and role of the council.
- B. Announcements that council nominations are being accepted should be sent to media (see Exhibit XII news release). This should be done in November.
- C. Members of "action committees" may provide speakers for service club programs. Develop fact sheets for distribution.
- D. Use news stories and newspaper columns on radio; the council chairman can be interviewed by an area specialist or station personnel.
- E. Junior 4-H leaders may want to use the election as tie-in for citizenship programs.
- F. Adult and youth leaders can help organize telephone, baby-sitting and transportation committees.
- G. Develop posters, window displays, hand bills and other election-promoting literature.

### III. Using Mass Media Outlets

- A. Announcement of election date and acceptance of nominations must be published in at least one county newspaper 30 days prior to the election. This is a paid public notice, not a news story.
- B. The council chairman, committee chairman or county program director should solicit help of local newspaper editors and radio and television news directors in publicizing the election.
- C. Explain to media that information will be given to them in news releases periodically between now and election (Exhibit XIII, XIV, XV and XVI). To editors, suggest that they initiate a feature story or editorial about overall extension programs. To radio managers, suggest public service announcements and guest appearances on talk shows to promote local interest.
- D. Provide newspapers with photos and background information about council nominees prior to election.
- E. After ballots are in, get election information to local news media immediately. Encourage local newspapers to use photos and biographical information about new members.

### IV. Acknowledgement

- A. Once elections are over, write appreciation letters to news media and other appropriate groups.

### V. Publicity Material Enclosed With These Suggestions

- A. Newspaper
  - 1. Suggested release for November (Exhibit XII)
  - 2. Suggested release for December (Exhibit XIII)
  - 3. Suggested release for January (Exhibit XIV)
- B. Examples of public service announcements that can be discussed and delivered to local radio stations (Exhibits XV and XVI).

### VI. Problems Encountered in Prior Extension Council Elections

Occasionally, problems have occurred that might have been avoided had decisions been made ahead of time. Meeting minutes should show these decisions. Below is a list of some problems and some suggested solutions.

- A. Tie vote. The present council decides in advance of the election how it will resolve a tie vote.
- B. Legal notice. News articles are not sufficient. The list of nominees must be published in a legal notice. See local editors. (Exhibit I)
- C. Lack of clarity on district boundaries. A map of the county showing district boundaries may be published in newspapers.
- D. Nominees.
  - 1. Get nominations made on time. Keep nominees informed of developments; be sure they have accepted before names are published.
  - 2. Order of listing names on ballot. Present council may draw numbers for position.
- E. Deadline date for nominating petitions to be submitted. This must be included in the legal notice of nominees (Exhibit I).
- F. Polling places.
  - 1. Provide enough;

2. Keep open long enough; and
  3. Locate properly Judges for election.
- G. The county clerk may be helpful here with all technical and legal election aspects.
1. Do provide written instructions for judges.
  2. Nominees and council members shall not serve as judges.
- H. Insufficient voting instructions. Make sure they are clearly stated and easily understood.
- I. Complaints of not receiving a mail ballot. Carefully check mailing lists and announce where ballots may be obtained.
- J. Write-in ballots. It is not the intent of the legislative act to have write-in ballots, so any person's name written in on the official ballot will not be counted.
- K. Statutes do not make provisions for absentee ballot.
- L. Criteria, not on the basis of race or sex, for the selection of council members should be established.

## Exhibits

### Exhibit I

[Nominee publication form \(DOC\)](#)

This must be an official legal notice.

### Exhibit II

[Nomination petition for the office of council member \(DOC\)](#)

25 or more signatures are required for candidacy.

### Exhibit III

[Election Meeting Notice \(DOC\)](#) (if polls or meetings are used)

This may be adapted to polling place type of election.

### Exhibit IV

[Voting instructions letter to accompany ballot \(DOC\)](#)

Postage must be paid by the local council.

### Exhibit V

[Sample ballot \(DOC\)](#)

Add the number of districts and nominees applicable to the county.

### Exhibit VI

[Sample ballot — poll or meeting \(DOC\)](#)

## Exhibit VII

[Registration log \(DOC\)](#)

If meetings or polls are used.

## Exhibit VIII

[Certification of district election \(DOC\)](#)

To be used if polls or meetings are used.

## Exhibit IX

[Sample news article \(DOC\)](#)

To be published one week before final date for receiving mail ballots.

## Exhibit X

[Sample letter \(DOC\)](#)

To use in contacting local farm organizations for extension council appointments.

## Exhibit XI

[Sample letter calling first council meeting after the election \(DOC\)](#)

## Exhibit XII

[Suggested news release seeking nominees \(DOC\)](#)

This should go out in November.

## Exhibit XIII

[Suggested news release to go out in December \(DOC\)](#)

## Exhibit XIV

[Suggested news release to go out in January \(DOC\)](#)

## Exhibit XV

[Sample radio public service announcement \(DOC\)](#)

To run during the nomination period.

## Exhibit XVI

[Sample radio public service announcement \(DOC\)](#)

To run prior to elections.