

S.F. No. 1624 – Election provision of Metropolitan Council members

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Date: March 3, 2023

SF1624 provides for the election of Metropolitan Council Members. Currently, members are appointed by the governor. Metropolitan Council governance provisions are under the jurisdiction of this committee, which are in sections 24-30.

Section 1 [Candidate] adds Metropolitan Council members to the definition of “candidate” for purposes of campaign finance laws.

Section 2 [Amounts] establishes spending limits for Metropolitan Council candidates. The limit is \$30,000 for the first half of the term and \$90,000 for the second half of the term.

Section 3 [Contribution limits] establishes contribution limits for Metropolitan Council candidates. The limit is \$1000 for a two-year period.

Section 4 [Metropolitan Council elections account] establishes the Metropolitan Council elections account.

Section 5 [Metropolitan Council public subsidy] requires the Metropolitan Council to provide sufficient money to pay for the public subsidy and must deposit the money in the Metropolitan Council elections account. A Metropolitan Council candidate is eligible to receive a public subsidy of \$20,000 if the candidate agrees to spending limits. The Board must pay the subsidy to eligible candidates after the primary election.

Section 6 [Special election subsidy] requires eligible Metropolitan Council candidates in a special election to be paid a public subsidy.

Section 7 [Affidavit of contributions] requires Metropolitan Council candidates who are seeking the public subsidy to accumulate \$3000 in contributions from eligible voters.

Section 8 [When return required] requires Metropolitan Council candidates to return all or a portion of the public subsidy in certain circumstances.

Section 9 [Definitions] strikes the Metropolitan Council from the definition of “agency” in a statute relating to appointments to multimember agencies.

Section 10 [Nonpartisan offices] amends the definition of “nonpartisan offices” to include the Metropolitan Council offices for purposes of election laws.

Section 11 [State and local offices] adds the Metropolitan Council office to the affidavit of candidacy in the same manner as local government offices.

Section 12 [Candidates in state and county general elections] specifies that candidates may file for a Metropolitan Council office not more than 84 days or less than 70 days before the state primary. Affidavits must be filed with the secretary of state or the county auditor in candidate’s home county.

Section 13 [Absent candidates] allows a candidate for a Metropolitan Council office who will be absent during the filing period to file early in the same manner as other candidates.

Section 14 [Candidates; filing fees; petition in place of filing fee] requires a candidate for a Metropolitan Council office to pay a \$100 filing fee. Allows a candidate for a Metropolitan Council office to file a petition in place of a filing fee if the petition is signed by 500 people.

Section 15 [Other election districts] requires redistricting for Metropolitan Council districts to be done within 80 days of the legislature being redistricted or at least 15 weeks before the primary election in a year ending in two, whichever is earlier.

Section 16 [Allocation of election expenses] requires the secretary of state to include the Metropolitan Council when calculating the allocation of election expenses for elections that are held concurrently.

Section 17 [Officers] requires Metropolitan Council members to be elected at the state general election.

Section 18 [State and county nonpartisan primary ballot] requires Metropolitan Council offices to appear on the state and county nonpartisan primary ballot.

Section 19 [Vacancy in office of Metropolitan Council member] specifies the process for filling a vacancy in a Metropolitan Council office. The vacancy is filled by appointment made by the Metropolitan Council. Depending on how close the vacancy occurs to the next election, the appointee may serve the remainder of the term or a special election may be required. The Metropolitan Council may declare a vacancy in an office if a member is unable to serve for a 90-day period.

Section 20 [Special Metropolitan Council election] provides for canvassing special election returns for a special Metropolitan Council election.

Section 21 [General] allows an eligible voter to contest an election of a Metropolitan Council member in the same manner as for other offices.

Section 22 [Candidate] amends the definition of “candidate” to include Metropolitan Council candidates for purposes of the laws on fair campaign practices.

Section 23 (353D.01, subd 2) makes members of the Metropolitan Council eligible for the public employees defined contribution plan.

Section 24 (473.123, subd 1) amends the Metropolitan Council statute by requiring the appointment of 16 members and a chair by the governor until the completion of redistricting following the 2020 census. After the completion of redistricting, the Metropolitan Council shall be under the control of 17 members elected from each district. (There are currently 16 districts. The legislature must redraw the boundaries this year, as required under Minnesota Statutes, section 473.123, subd. 3a. SF 2171 redraws the boundaries for 16 districts, but the legislature could also redraw boundaries establishing 17 districts, consistent with this bill.)

Section 25 (473.123, subd 2b) is a new subdivision establishing the membership of the council, which is 17 members elected from the district. The term for members is four years, except the term for members elected in a year ending in “2” is two years.

Section 26 (473.123, subd 3a) requires council members to be elected in the year ending in the number “4” from newly drawn districts.

Section 27 (473.123, subd 4) requires the council members to select a council member to serve as chair for a period of two years.

Section 28 (473.123, subd 4a) is a new subdivision requiring that each council member be paid as authorized by the Metropolitan Council. The chair and members must be reimbursed for actual and necessary expenses.

Section 29 repeals the provisions related to the terms, membership, and salaries of the Metropolitan Council, which are replaced with new language in bill.

Section 30 provides the effective date.