

MEMORANDUM

January 30, 2026

TO: Honorable Mayor and City Commission
VIA: James Slaton, City Manager
FROM: Jennifer Nanek, City Clerk
RE: 2026 Municipal Election & Canvassing Board Information

2025 MUNICIPAL ELECTION INFORMATION

The regular Municipal Election of the City of Lake Wales is Tuesday, April 7, 2026. We will elect a Commissioner for Seat 3 and a Commissioner for Seat 5 for a term of three years beginning May 5, 2026. Members of the City Commission must be registered voters and residents of the City of Lake Wales for at least one year preceding their date of election.

The seat up for election is currently held by the following Commission member:

Seat 3	Keith Thompson
Seat 5	Robin Gibson

The Commissioners elected to Seats 3 and 5 are at-large, but candidates must live within their respective Seats.

The qualifying period for a person to qualify as a candidate is from 12:00 p.m., noon, Monday, February 16 through 12:00 p.m., noon, Friday, February 20. Candidate packets are available in the City Clerk’s office beginning 9:00 a.m., Friday, February 6. This packet contains qualifying papers, nominating petitions, and other necessary information and instructions to qualify as a candidate.

At the end of qualifying the City Clerk must prepare and submit to the Supervisor of Elections Office the approved ballot by 5:00 p.m. A special City Commission meeting has been scheduled for February 20 at 4:00 p.m. for that purpose. The scheduled special meeting date is also listed on the City Commission Calendar located under the City Manager portion of the agenda.

Due to a charter change approved last year we now have run-off elections. If a candidate does not win the majority of votes on April 7th, then there will be a run-off election on May 5th 2026.

The Municipal Election will be held at the Municipal Administration Building, 201 W. Central Ave., Lake Wales and at the Lake Ashton Clubhouse, 4141 Ashton Club Drive,

Lake Wales on Tuesday, April 7, 2026, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. The City Commission will reschedule its first meeting in April from 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, April 7 to 6:00 p.m., Wednesday, April 8.

Contact the Supervisor of Elections at 863-534-5888 to request a Vote by Mail Ballot. Voter registration deadline is March 9, 2026.

CANVASSING BOARD INFORMATION

While the Supervisor of Elections and the City Clerk may perform many of the tasks necessary to conduct the election, the City Commission serves as the Municipal Canvassing Board and has legal responsibilities related to the conduct of the Municipal Election. It is necessary to review the responsibilities well in advance to prevent calendar conflicts because a quorum must be present at all Canvassing Board meetings.

The following rules apply to all members of the Canvassing Board:

No member can serve if they are a candidate with opposition in the election being canvassed or is *actively participating* in the campaign or the candidacy of any candidate who has opposition in the election being canvassed. Actively participating means undertaking an intentional effort to demonstrate or generate public support for a candidate beyond merely making a campaign contribution. Refer to DE 8-10; 09-07.

If a lack of a quorum is created on the Canvassing Board due to this rule or any other unavoidable cause, the City Commission may appoint the city manager, city attorney, or resident/s to serve in the absence of that commission member/s to serve on the Canvassing Board to avoid a possible lack of quorum (Sec. 8-26, Lake Wales Code of Ordinances). The City Clerk will prepare an agenda item for the first meeting in March for the City Commission to appoint additional people to serve on the Canvassing Board.

Per Florida Statute, Canvassing Board members are required to attend the following meetings.

Pre-election Logic and Accuracy Testing of Tabulating Equipment (L&A)

Tuesday, March 31, 2026; 3:30 p.m.

Elections Operations Center, 70 Florida Citrus Blvd. Winter Haven, FL 33880 (behind the Auburndale Speedway).

-At least one member of the Canvassing Board must attend the L&A Testing.

Election Night Canvassing of Ballots

Tuesday, April 7, 2026, time to be scheduled by SOE (5:00 p.m. or later)

Elections Operations Center, 70 Florida Citrus Blvd. Winter Haven, FL 33880

-A quorum must be present and must remain until all ballots are tabulated.

Certification of Election

City of Lake Wales Municipal Administration Building
Thursday, April 9, 2026; 5:00 p.m.
-A Quorum must be present.

Post-Election Manual Audit

Tuesday April 14, 2026 with Time to be determined.
Elections Operations Center, 70 Florida Citrus Blvd. Winter Haven, FL 33880
-A quorum must be present.

ATTACHMENTS

Seat Map