

Guide to Seeking Elected Office Manchester-by-the-Sea 2023

Citizens of Manchester-by-the-Sea may choose to serve town government by seeking election to any of the offices appearing on the ballot for the Annual Town Election.

2023 Annual Town Election Tuesday May 16, 2023

The General Bylaws of the Town set the dates for the Annual Town Meeting and Election and allows for the Select Board to change those dates if necessary.

The Town Clerk posts the list of elected positions to appear on each year's ballot. The list of officials to be elected varies annually and depends on the term expiration dates, any resignations, and/or deaths.

In Manchester-by-the-Sea, the following seats are filled by elected officials.

Constables

Three seats, serving three-year terms.

Select Board

Board of five members, serving three-year terms.

Moderator

One Moderator, serving a one-year term.

Regional School Committee

There are four Manchester members, serving three-year terms.

Planning Board

Board of five members, serving three-year terms.

Manchester Housing Authority

Board of four elected members, serving five-year terms and one State-appointed member.

Trustee of the Library

Board of three members, serving three -year terms.

2023 OPEN SEATS

2 Select Board seats, 1 Moderator, 1 School Committee, 2 Planning Board, 1 Housing Authority, 1 Library Trustee

Voter Registration

Candidates seeking election in Manchester-by-the-Sea MUST be registered voters of the Town.

Residents are eligible to register to vote if they are:

A US Citizen (by birth or naturalization); and are 18 years of age by the date of election.

Residents may register to vote, check their voter status, and change their voter registration at www.registertovotema.com

A minimum time of residency is not required to register to vote.

Your registration status will remain permanent and current so long as your household responds to the Annual Town Census or unless you notify us of any changes. Please let the Town Clerk's Office know if you change your address, your last name, or any other details regarding your status so that we can ensure the most up-to-date records.

The Annual Town Census is mailed out at the beginning of every year as mandated by Massachusetts General Law 51 §4. If your household does not respond to the Annual Town Census, your voter registration will be listed as "Inactive". You may still be eligible to vote but will be required to produce documentation at the polls proving that you still reside at the Manchester-by-the-Sea address at which you are registered.

The Nomination Process

Candidates seeking elected office must "run" for office by obtaining nomination papers from the Office of the Town Clerk, gathering necessary voter signatures, and filing papers by the appropriate deadline.

Each candidate shall file with the Town Clerk a written intent to run containing his/her name and address, contact information and the office for which he/she intends to be a candidate. The Office certifies each candidate's voter registration status when obtaining nomination papers.

The Board of Registrars/Town Clerk must certify all nomination papers. They certify that the minimum number of signatures of registered voters has been obtained.

Names of candidates are placed on the ballot in alphabetical order, with incumbents listed first as "candidate for reelection", immediately followed by names of new candidates.

Candidates for any elected position in Manchester-by-the-Sea shall obtain a minimum of twenty-nine (29) certifiable signatures of persons registered to vote in the Town. This number changes depending on the number of local voters in the Governor's election. Candidates are encouraged to obtain enough additional signatures (5-10 extra) to ensure meeting minimum requirements. To accomplish this, candidates may obtain 2 sheets of nomination papers. Once prepared, candidates must accept the nomination by signing all nomination papers received. Only those papers containing signatures must be submitted for certification.

Nomination papers must be submitted to the Board of Registrars/Town Clerk's Office for certification of all signatures by the designated deadline. It is recommended that candidates submit papers in advance of the final deadline to allow for obtaining additional signatures should insufficient signatures be certifiable.

A candidate has until 33 days before the election to withdraw from nomination and remove his/her name from the ballot. To do so, a candidate must submit a notarized letter to the Town Clerk requesting his/her name be removed from the ballot.

2023 Candidate Deadlines

- Candidates must obtain nomination papers from the Town Clerk Office when available - **January 2, 2023**
- Candidates must file completed nomination papers with the Board of Registrars/Town Clerk for certification no later than 5:00 p.m., 49 days prior to the election – **Tuesday March 28, 2023 with 29 signatures**
- A candidate may withdraw his/her name from the ballot, via a written notarized letter to the Town Clerk, no later than 33 days prior to the election. After the withdrawal deadline, names of all candidates with certified nomination papers on file will be placed on the ballot for the upcoming election. Potential candidates who failed to return their nomination papers, or to obtain necessary signatures, do not qualify to have their name on the ballot – **Thursday April 13, 2023.**

Information candidates should know and share with their supporters.

- To be eligible to vote in an election, a resident must be registered to vote at least 10 days prior to the election day.
- Absentee voting is always available if one is unable to vote at the polls on Election Day do to: absence from the town during the hours that the polls are open, physical disability, or religious belief (M.G.L. Chap. 54, Sec. 86.)

Mail in absentee voting:

For a ballot to be mailed, a written request, or a printed form provided by the Office of the Town Clerk, must be returned to the Town Clerk’s Office, 10 Central Street, Manchester-by-the-Sea, MA 01944. The form should contain the voter’s name as registered, the address at which one is registered to vote, and the address to which the ballot should be mailed. The signed application may be hand delivered, mailed, or emailed. (Electronic signatures are not acceptable) A relative may apply in person at the Town Clerk's Office for an absentee ballot to be mailed to a family member.

All ballots must be mailed to the absent voter (unless voting in person over the counter and for certain specific hospitalization events). The ballots may be returned by mail, or hand-delivered to the Office of the Town Clerk up to the time the polls close on Election Day.

Voters should be aware of the time frame affecting the vote and allow enough time for mailings back and forth. The Office of the Town Clerk processes requests promptly. Last minute requests will be honored, but generally do not have a great success in being returned by the close of the election.

Ballots cannot be hand-delivered to the polls.

The last day to request an absentee ballot to be mailed is 7 days prior to Election Day.

In person absentee voting:

Voters may also vote in person (over the counter) before Election Day. They will complete a request form and vote in person at the Town Clerk’s office. The last day for in person absentee voting is noon the day before Election Day.

**Voters who file a doctor’s letter indicating permanent disability will receive an application for an absentee ballot at least 28 days before every election. Permanent Absentee voters should inform the Town Clerk and receive an absentee ballot application in January for the year.

2023 DATES

Last day to register to vote is Saturday May 6, 2023

Last day to request an absentee by mail ballot is May 11, 2023

Last day to vote absentee in person is 12:00PM May 17, 2023

Campaign Finance & Campaign Activities

Voter Lists

Candidates for any elected position may request a list of registered voters in Manchester-by-the-Sea from the Town Clerk’s Office.

Campaign Finance

Candidates for elected municipal offices are obligated to adhere to the Massachusetts General Laws governing the financing of political campaigns, MGL c.55 §1-42. Candidates and political committees are required to disclose all campaign contributions received and campaign expenditures made.

Candidates who may possibly receive contributions (cash or in-kind), or expend funds while seeking municipal office, must complete and file the appropriate forms with the Town Clerk at times stipulated by campaign finance regulations. No funds may be accepted, nor expenses incurred until the proper campaign finance forms are filed with the Town Clerk.

There are many different campaign finance forms. The Town Clerk's Office will provide all candidates with campaign finance information and will encourage the candidates to review the information on the website for the Office of Political Campaign Finance, <https://www.ocpf.us>

All reports of campaign finance activity will be posted on the Town's website.

2023 CAMPAIGN FINANCE DEADLINES

Pre-Election Report: Due 8 days prior to the Election: **May 8, 2023**

For: All campaign activity from January 1st to April 28, 2023

Post-Election Report: Due 30 days after the Election: **June 15, 2023**

For: All campaign activity from April 29 to June 5, 2022

Year-End Report: Due for ALL elected officials: **January 20, 2024**

This year-end report must be filed every year so long as a committee is in existence, or a candidate maintains a campaign fund, has outstanding debts, or is an elected official.

Campaign Activities

Candidates should become familiar with the State statutes that govern their campaign practices. For more information, refer to the specific Massachusetts General Law cited. Any questions should be directed to OCPF.

- Political Committees; statement of organization; treasurer; secretary; duties; expenditures; penalties (55:4) Candidates may be their own chairperson but not the treasurer if establishing a campaign committee; Public employees may not hold the office of campaign Treasurer; Campaign finance records must be retained for 6 years following date of election.
- Failure to Report (55:3) The civil penalty for failure to report campaign activities is \$25/day.
- Issuance of Campaign Checks (55:5) No person shall sign a committee check payable to himself/herself.
- Soliciting contributions in public buildings prohibited (55:14) Solicitation of funds/acceptance of payment prohibited within a public building.
- Reports of contributions and expenditures; persons required to file; contents; reporting periods; time limits; penalties (55:18)
- Posting of Campaign Finance Reports (55:26) Campaign finance reports required to be filed with the Town Clerk, with activity greater than \$1,000/ period, shall be made available for viewing on the internet.
- Publishing political advertisements; statement; names; signatures, etc.; penalties (56:39) Procedures and wording for publishing a political advertisement for candidates or ballot question committees;
- Unauthorized use of endorsements; penalty (56:41A) Consent of Persons listed as endorsing a candidate/ballot question;
- Interfering with distribution of printed matter (56:43) Persons prohibited from interfering with lawful distribution of circulars, posters, printed material intended to influence voters;

- Interfering with election officials (56:48) Persons prohibited from interfering with election officials, the Town Clerk, and Election Officers in their performance of duties.

Electioneering - 150 FOOT RULE

950 C.M.R. 52.03(22)(d); 950 C.M.R. 53.03(18)(d); 950 C.M.R. 54.04(22)(d)

Candidates and/or ballot question committee members are prohibited from remaining within 150' of a poll entrance to greet and/or promote any candidacy or cause to be voted at an election. This includes signage. No person shall solicit votes for or against, or otherwise promote or oppose, any person or political party or position on a ballot question to be voted on at the current election while within 150' of the polls. This regulation does not restrict the rights of these individuals to vote or the rights of candidates to have observers within the polling place.

Election Day

As of 2022, Manchester-by-the-Sea voters will again use at the Memorial Elementary School, 43 Lincoln Street, Manchester, MA 01944 as the polling place. Voters should use the gym doors and not try to enter the building from any other door.

Election results are generated by the Imagecast Optical Scan Election System, plus hand-counted ballots when needed, and tallied at the polls where voting occurs. Upon completion of the required procedures at the polling place, the voting materials are delivered to the Town Clerk's Office for review and compilation by the Town Clerk.

Election results are posted on the door of the polling place, on the Town website and in Town Hall.

Candidates and other interested persons may obtain election results upon the closing of the polls and posting of results on election night.

Additional Assistance or Information

Dianne K. Bucco, MMC/CMMC
Town Clerk, 10 Central Street, Manchester-by-the-Sea, MA 01944
978.526.2040
townclerk@manchester.ma.us

The Town Clerk's Office is open the following hours for your convenience:

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday	8:30 AM to 5 PM
Thursday	8:30 AM to 6:30 PM
Friday	Closed to the Public

www.manchester.ma.us