The Nuts & Bolts of Township Elections

2020 TOI Education Seminar
Township Election Process

- Getting on the ballot
  - Political Party Candidates
    - Caucus
    - Primary
  - New Party Candidates
  - Independent Candidates
- General Issues
- Objections
Pathways To The Ballot

**Caucus**
- Central Committee Establishes Rules
- Caucus 12/1/20
- Filing Period 12/14/20 - 12/21/20

**Primary**
- Circulate Petitions 8/25/20
- Petition Filing 11/16/20 - 11/23/20
- Primary Election 2/23/21

**New Party**
- Circulate Petitions 9/22/20
- Petition Filing 12/14/20 - 12/21/20

**Independent**
- Circulate Petitions 9/22/20
- Petition Filing 12/14/20 - 12/21/20

**Township Election**
- 4/6/21
Political Party Nominations

CAUCUS

PRIMARY ELECTION
The Township Caucus

What is a Township Caucus?

A meeting of members of a particular political party to select candidates for office
The Township Caucus
December 1, 2020
COVID-19 and the Township Caucus
The Township Caucus

Who has a caucus?

- Political parties must nominate by caucus except as follows:

  - Primary elections are required for townships with populations over 5,000 whose boundaries are co-extensive with or lie wholly within incorporated towns not under the commission form of government.

  - Townships in Cook County and townships with a population over 15,000 may determine (by 11-15-12) to nominate candidates by primary.
Who is in charge of the Caucus?
The Township Caucus
Who is in charge of the caucus?

- Township Central Committee
  - All counties except Cook County: The elected or appointed precinct committeemen of each established political party within the township; or
  - Cook County: The elected or appointed township committeemen of each established political party.
The Township Caucus
What is the role of the central committee?

- Promulgate rules of procedure for the caucus;
- Provide notice of the caucus;
- Canvass and declare the results of the caucus
The Township Caucus

What are the caucus rules?

- Initially promulgated by township central committee
- Adopted (and may be amended) by the caucus participants

Rules must include...

- Caucus will not start earlier than 6:00 p.m.
- Will commence at place specified in notice
- Provisions on judges
- Nomination procedures
- Method of voting
- Whether slates will be allowed
- Whether written notice to be a candidate is required
The Township Caucus
Who can participate in the caucus?

Eligibility requirements include:

- Registered to vote;
- Registered within the township (or multi-township);
- Must sign an affidavit stating registered voter and affiliated with the political party holding the caucus;
- May not take part in another party’s caucus;
- May not sign a petition of nomination for an independent or new political party candidate for the same election;
- Participant may not become an independent candidate or candidate of a new political party.*
The Township Caucus

Who can participate in the caucus?

Certain individuals prohibited from participating if (within last 12 months):

- Elected or appointed public official of another party;
- Elected or appointed person of another established political party;
- Judge of election for another statewide established political party;
- Voter who voted in primary election of another statewide established political party
The Township Caucus

The Lockout Rules

- Candidate who participates in the caucus and who is defeated for his or her nomination at the caucus
- Ineligible to be listed on the ballot as a candidate of another political party or as an independent candidate.
The Township Caucus

Additional Issues

- Can only nominate one candidate per office
- Cannot require candidates to circulate petitions
- Cannot require candidates to pay a fee
The Township Caucus

Notice Requirements

• Three Notice Requirements

  • Township Clerk to Chairman of obligation to report the time and location of the party’s caucus (not less than 30 days before the caucus)
  • Chairman to Township Clerk on time and place of caucus
  • Township Board published notices of the times and places of the respective caucuses
The Township Caucus

Notice Requirements

- First Notice
  - Township Clerk to Chairman of Township Central Committee
  - Notice is to advise Chairman of obligation to report the time and location of the party’s caucus
  - Must be sent at least 30 days before the date of the caucus
The Township Caucus
Notice Requirements

- Second Notice
  - Chairman to Township Clerk
  - Notifies of time and location of the party’s caucus
  - Must be done at least 20 days before the caucus
  - Must be by first-class mail
No Notice?

No notice from the committee, no caucus!
No notice from the committee, cannot fill vacancies in nomination!
The Township Caucus

Notice Requirements

- Third Notice
  - Township Board publishes in a newspaper of general circulation in township
  - Notice gives dates and locations of the caucus
  - Published at least 10 days before the caucus
Caucus Notice Deadlines

November 1, 2020
- Township Clerk’s Notice to Central Committee

November 11, 2020
- Central Committee Chair’s Notice on Caucus

November 21, 2020
- Township Clerk Notice of Caucus Publication
The Township Caucus

The Caucus Agenda

1. Sign-in
2. Call to Order
3. Elect Secretary
4. Review/Approve Rules
5. Overview Method of Voting
6. Call for Nominations
7. Declare Nominations Closed
8. Vote on Nominations
9. Tally Votes
10. Adjourn
Primary Elections

- Established political parties select their candidates
- Primary is February 23, 2021
- Filing period is November 2, 2020 – November 9, 2020
- Must file nominating petitions, statement of candidacy, statement of economic interests
Primary Elections

- **Signature Requirement**
  - .5% of the qualified primary electors of the candidate’s party.
- **Can start circulating on August 25, 2020**
- **Filing Period: November 16, 2020 – November 23, 2020**
New Political Parties
New Political Parties

- Requirements for Ballot Access
  - Individuals can create “new” political parties
  - Requires a full slate of candidates to run (e.g., supervisor, four trustees, clerk, highway commissioner, etc.)
  - Must file nominating petitions, statement of candidacy for each candidate, statement of economic interest for each candidate, certificate for stating party officers.
  - Signature requirement: Not less than 5% of the total number of persons who voted at the last township election.
  - If get more than 5% of the vote, become an “established” political party.
New Political Parties

- Petition circulation starts: September 22, 2020
- Filing Period: December 14, 2020 – December 21, 2020
Independent Candidates
Independent Candidates

- Requirements for Ballot Access
  - Individuals who are not candidates of a political party, but who are candidates in an election where party candidates appear on the ballot.
  - File nominating petitions with Township Clerk
  - Signature requirement is not less than 5% nor more than 8% (or 50 more than the minimum whichever is greater) of the total number of persons who voted at the last township election.
  - Also must file statement of candidacy and statement of economic interests.
Independent Candidates

- Petition circulation starts: September 22, 2020
- Filing Period: December 14, 2020 – December 21, 2020
Where do all of these candidates file their petitions?
Township Elections
Other issues

• Multi-Township Offices
• Dates of Office
  • Supervisor, Trustees, Clerk, Highway Commissioner: *May 17, 2021*
  • Assessors & Collectors: *January 1, 2022*

• Qualifications
  • Resident of the township for at least one year prior to filing petitions or caucus
  • Registered voter of the Township
  • Assessor has additional qualifications*
Township Elections

Objections

- What if candidates don’t comply with the legal requirements?
Township Elections: Resources

- State Board of Elections
  - Township Caucus Guide
  - www.elections.il.gov
Questions

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