

§ 163-302. Absentee and early voting.

(a) In any municipal election, including a primary or general election or referendum, mail-in absentee voting and early voting may, upon resolution of the municipal governing body, be permitted. Such resolution must be adopted no later than 60 days prior to an election in order to be effective for that election. Any such resolution shall remain effective for all future elections unless repealed no later than 60 days before an election. A copy of all resolutions adopted under this section shall be filed with the State Board and the county board of elections conducting the election within 10 days of passage in order to be effective. In addition, mail-in absentee voting and early voting shall be allowed in any referendum on incorporation of a municipality.

(b) The provisions of Articles 20 and 21A of this Chapter shall apply to mail-in absentee voting in municipal elections, special district elections, and other elections for an area less than an entire county other than elections for the General Assembly, except that the earliest date by which mail-in absentee ballots shall be required to be available for mail-in absentee voting in such elections shall be 30 days prior to the primary or election or as quickly following the filing deadline specified in G.S. 163-291(2) or G.S. 163-294(c) as the county board of elections is able to secure the official ballots. In elections on incorporation of a municipality not held at the same time as another election in the same area, the county board of elections shall adopt a special schedule of meetings of the county board of elections to approve mail-in absentee ballot applications so as to reduce the cost of the process, and to further implement the last paragraph of G.S. 163-230(2)a. If no application has been received since the last meeting, no meeting shall be held of the county board of elections under such schedule unless the meeting is scheduled for another purpose. If another election is being held in the same area on the same day, or elsewhere in the county, the cost of per diem for meetings of the county board of elections to approve absentee ballots shall not be considered a cost of the election to be billed to the municipality being created. (1971, c. 835, s. 1; 1975, c. 370, s. 1; c. 836; 1977, c. 475, s. 1; 1983, c. 324, s. 6; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 933, s. 1; 2014-111, s. 10; 2017-6, s. 3; 2018-146, s. 3.1(a), (b); 2021-56, s. 1.5(c); 2022-6, s. 20.6A(b), (e); 2023-140, s. 41.)