

2016 Municipal Election Guide For Candidates

The following is general information pertinent to running for municipal office or school board for the City of Hartselle. It is not an all inclusive discussion of all election laws and practices, but hopefully it will provide answers to questions frequently asked by candidates.

General Information

Municipal elections will be held for the Office of Mayor and for five City Council positions along with five City School Board members on Tuesday, August 23, 2016. If a runoff election is required in any race it will be October 4, 2016. These are non-partisan, at-large elections. Qualifying begins on July 5, 2016 at 7:30 a.m. and ends July 19, 2016 at 5:00 p.m. A \$50.00 non-refundable and non-transferable qualifying fee is required to seek election to the Offices of Mayor or City Council or School Board. Hartselle Council Members and Hartselle City Board of Education members run in places instead of districts. Candidates must qualify for Place 1, Place 2, Place 3, Place 4, or Place 5. These positions are for balloting purposes only, however candidates are elected by a city-wide vote. If after qualifying a candidate wishes to qualify in another place, the candidate must start the process again, including paying an additional \$50.00 qualifying fee.

Newly elected municipal officials and school board members assume office November 7, 2016.

Candidates must understand that they are responsible for seeing that they properly satisfy the requirements of Alabama law to run for office. You must meet the following requirements:

1. Be a resident of the City of Hartselle for at least 90 days prior to the election date. (Code of Alabama 11-46-25)
2. Registered to vote in the City of Hartselle. (Code of Alabama 11-46-22)
3. Must not have been convicted of treason, embezzlement of public funds, malfeasance in office, larceny, bribery or any other crime punishable by imprisonment in the state or federal penitentiary. (Code of Alabama 36-2-1)

Municipal employees may run for office. If elected, though, they will have to resign from their jobs. To be a candidate, the employee must take an unpaid leave of absence or use personal leave or compensatory time. Employees who violate this provision will be terminated. Employees and public officials may not use public funds or property for political activity. Employees who campaign must do so on their own time.

Statement of Economic Interest:

Simultaneously with qualifying to run for office, the Ethics Law requires all candidates to file a Statement of Economic Interest. The election official (City Clerk) must have certification of this filing from the Ethics Commission or the **name shall NOT appear on the ballot.** Incumbents or certain government employees who become candidates do not have to file this form at the time they qualify, as they are required to file an annual report with the Ethics Commission not later than April 30 of each

year. (§36-25-15, Code of Alabama, 1975) If you have additional questions contact the Alabama Ethics Commission, P. O Box 4840, Montgomery, Alabama 36103-4840, (334) 242-2997, or www.ethics.alabama.gov .

Fair Campaign Practices Act:

The Fair Campaign Practices Act requires all candidates to file with Probate Judge Greg Cain a list of from two to five persons who will serve as their campaign committee. Candidates may serve as their own committee, but must still file a form to this effect, and must designate someone to dissolve the committee in the event of his/her death or incapacity. This form must be filed within five (5) days of qualifying to run for office (§17-22A-4, Code of Alabama, 1975), - **OR** - when a prospective candidate reaches \$1,000 in campaign contributions or reaches \$1,000 in expenditures with intent to become a candidate, this form establishing the committee must be filed within five (5) days of reaching that threshold. Forms are available from the City Clerk, Probate Judge, or the Secretary of State website www.sos.alabama.us/election.

Also, the Fair Campaign Practices Act (FCPA) requires all political advertisement to be clearly marked with a statement that the communication is a paid political advertisement, identifying the person or committee who paid for or authorized the advertisement. **It is unlawful for any person or committee to distribute, broadcast or publish any campaign literature or political advertisement, including cards, T-shirts, pamphlets, circulars, posters or other printed material related to or concerning the election, without this notice.**

Campaign signs

All campaign signs must comply with the City's sign ordinance. Below is an excerpt and summary from the ordinance concerning political signs (the entire sign ordinance can be found on the City's website at www.hartselle.org)

- h. Political signs are allowed announcing candidates seeking public office or in relation to any election or public referendum, subject to the following provisions:
 - (i) Such signs are placed entirely on private property.
 - (ii) Such signs are removed within three days after the election or referendum for which they were prepared has been decided.
 - (iii) Political signs shall not exceed six (6) square feet in residential zones nor 32 square feet in business zones

Council Information

The City Council is required by law to meet twice monthly for regular meetings. In addition, the Council holds two work sessions when necessary to discuss in detail items that will appear on the agenda of the regular meeting. Hartselle City Board of Education meets once a month.

Beginning with the November 2008 term, the salary for Mayor is \$55,000 annually, Council President \$9,500 and each Council Member \$8,000 annually. The compensation for the Board of Education members is \$6,000 annually.

If any additional information or assistance is needed, please contact Election Manager Rita Lee, City Clerk – Controller at 751-4926, or email at rlee@hartselle.org