



Candidate Filing Packet



City of Stillwater
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City of Stillwater Candidate Filing Handbook 2026 Municipal Election

WELCOME!

Thank you for your interest in serving the residents of Stillwater. This handbook is intended to guide candidates through the filing process and provide an overview of campaign requirements and the responsibilities of elected office. Please contact the City Clerk's Office at 651-430-8800 with any questions.

Candidates should review Minnesota Statutes Chapters 200–211B and are encouraged to review the Minnesota Secretary of State's Campaign Manual, which provides comprehensive information on campaign finance, campaign practices, and other election laws. The manual is available online at www.sos.mn.gov. The City Clerk's Office can answer procedural questions but cannot provide legal advice or campaign strategy.

Candidate Quick Reference Checklist

- Confirm you meet the qualifications for office
- Complete and sign the Affidavit of Candidacy before an authorized official.
- Submit the \$5 filing fee (or qualifying petition)
- File between July 14, 2026 (8:00 a.m.) and July 28, 2026 (5:00 p.m.)
- Review campaign finance reporting requirements
- Review campaign sign regulations
- File all required campaign finance reports and certification after the election

Important Election Dates

July 14 – July 28	Candidate Filing
July 30	Last day to file Affidavit of Withdrawal
June 26 – Nov 13	Political signs may be posted
October 23	Pre-General Campaign Financial Reports Due
November 3	General Election Day
November 10	Campaign Financial Report Certification of Filing Due
December 3	Post-General Campaign Finance Report Due
January 4, 2027	Term begins and sworn in at first meeting on January 5, 2027 at 7 pm
January 31, 2027	Annual Campaign Finance Report Due (if required)

Forms and Reference Handouts

Affidavit of Candidacy	IRS Political Organization Filing Requirements
Affidavit of Withdrawal	MN Attorney General Memo on Auto Dialing
Candidate Information Form	MnDOT Letter to Candidates
Campaign Financial Report	City of Stillwater Ward Map
Campaign Financial Report Certification of Filing	Campaign Manual

Order Forms: Map Order Form, Registered Voter List Request Form, Absentee Ballot Applicant List Request Form, Accepted Absentee/Mail Ballot List Request Form, Rejected Absentee Ballot List Request Form, Polling Place List Request Form and Precinct Finder Request Form

Fillable forms are available on the Secretary of State website: <https://www.sos.mn.gov/election-administration-campaigns/election-administration/campaign-filing-packet/>

HOW TO FILE FOR OFFICE

Thank you for your interest in serving your community through public office. The information below outlines the qualifications for office, filing requirements, and important information for candidates seeking election to the Stillwater City Council.

Qualifications

- Must be an eligible voter
- Must be at least 21 years of age upon assuming office
- Candidate must reside in the Ward in which they seek election and maintained residence in the Ward in the City from which the candidate seeks election for 30 days before the election
- Has not filed for another office in the same election

Filing Requirements

File an Affidavit of Candidacy, provide required contact information, pay the filing fee or submit a qualifying petition, and appear before a notary public or an authorized City employee.

A candidate for a City office who will be absent from the state during the filing period may arrange with the Stillwater City Clerk to submit the required Affidavit of Candidacy and filing fee or petition during the seven days immediately preceding the candidate's absence.

Filing for office is not complete without the filing fee or petition filed in lieu of the fee. A candidate who provides the filing fee by check or other instrument for which sufficient funds are not available will have their name removed from the ballot and is liable for all costs incurred by election officials in removing the name from the ballot.

To petition in lieu of a filing fee, five or more voters may "draft" a candidate by filing an application on behalf of a candidate with the clerk. The candidate must indicate his or her willingness to run by signing the application. The petition in lieu of a filing fee must have the lessor of 500 signatures or 5% of the total number of votes cast in the last general election when the office was on the ballot. *M.S. 204B.11 Subd.2(d)*.

Where to File

Candidates filing for Stillwater Local Office must file with City Clerk at Stillwater City Hall, 216 4th Street N, Stillwater, MN 55082. Candidates can file for these offices:

CITY OF STILLWATER	TERM
Mayor	Four Years
Council Member Ward 1	Four Years
Council Member Ward 4	Four Years

All candidate filings will appear of the Secretary of State's Candidate Filings search page online at <https://candidates.sos.mn.gov>. Candidate affidavits are posted as received, generally the same day.

Withdrawal

If after filing you decide you no longer wish to run for office, you must file an Affidavit of Withdrawal no later than 5:00 P.M. on **Thursday, July 30, 2026**. The names of all candidates who do not file an Affidavit of Withdrawal before the deadline will appear on the ballot – no exceptions. The filing fee is non-refundable.

ABOUT THE CITY OF STILLWATER

Stillwater is a historic riverfront community of approximately 19,500 residents located along the scenic St. Croix River in Washington County, Minnesota. As one of the state's oldest communities, Stillwater is widely recognized as the "Birthplace of Minnesota" for its role in the 1848 Territorial Convention that paved the way for Minnesota's statehood.

Today, Stillwater offers a unique blend of historic character, vibrant neighborhoods, thriving businesses, outstanding parks and trails, and a high quality of life. The city's historic downtown, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, serves as a regional destination for shopping, dining, tourism, and community events while preserving the community's rich architectural and cultural heritage.

The City of Stillwater operates under a Council-Manager form of government. The City Council establishes policies, adopts the annual budget, approves ordinances, and sets the long-term vision for the community. Professional staff, led by the City Administrator, are responsible for implementing Council policies and managing the City's day-to-day operations.

The City provides a full range of municipal services, including police and fire protection, public works, utilities, engineering, planning and community development, parks and recreation, library services, elections, licensing, and administrative services. Through responsible financial management and long-range planning, the City continues to invest in infrastructure, economic development, environmental stewardship, and public safety while preserving the unique character that has made Stillwater one of Minnesota's most desirable communities.

Residents value Stillwater's strong sense of community, historic preservation, exceptional natural resources, and commitment to providing high-quality public services. Serving as an elected official offers the opportunity to help guide the City's future while honoring its rich history and responding to the evolving needs of residents, businesses, and visitors.

SERVING AS A STILLWATER ELECTED OFFICIAL

Serving on the Stillwater City Council is an opportunity to help shape the future of the community through thoughtful leadership, public service, and responsible decision-making. Councilmembers are elected to represent the interests of all residents, establish City policies, and make decisions that promote the health, safety, and welfare of the community.

Primary Responsibilities

City Council members are responsible for:

- Establishing City policies and long-term goals.
- Adopting the annual operating and capital improvement budgets.
- Approving ordinances, resolutions, and City policies.
- Reviewing and approving major development proposals and land use decisions.
- Making decisions regarding public infrastructure, parks, utilities, public safety, and other municipal services.
- Appointing citizens to advisory boards and commissions.
- Hiring and evaluating the City Administrator and City Attorney.
- Representing the City at community events and regional meetings.

Meeting and Preparation Expectations

Councilmembers should expect to:

- Attend regular City Council meetings, held on the **first and third Tuesday** of each month.
- Attend Council workshops, special meetings, budget sessions, and public hearings as needed.
- Review Council agenda packets and supporting materials in advance of each meeting to make informed decisions.
- Participate respectfully in Council discussions and work collaboratively with fellow elected officials and City staff.

Commission and Board Assignments

Councilmembers are appointed to serve as liaisons to City boards and commissions and may also represent the City on regional organizations and joint powers boards. These assignments provide opportunities to stay informed on important issues and communicate information between the Council and the organizations they serve.

Training and Legal Responsibilities

Newly elected officials receive orientation and training on their roles and responsibilities.

Councilmembers are expected to:

- Comply with Minnesota's Open Meeting Law.
- Follow the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act.
- Complete required ethics, harassment prevention, and other mandatory training.
- Avoid conflicts of interest and conduct themselves in accordance with state law and City policies.

Representing the Community

Councilmembers serve the entire community by listening to residents, businesses, and stakeholders, considering a variety of perspectives, and making decisions that are in the best interest of the City as a whole. While individual Councilmembers may receive questions or concerns from residents, policy decisions are made collectively by the City Council during public meetings.

Time Commitment

Serving on the City Council requires preparation and ongoing engagement beyond attending meetings. In addition to twice-monthly Council meetings, members should expect time for reviewing agenda materials, attending workshops, serving on assigned committees or regional boards, participating in community events, and responding to constituent inquiries. While the time commitment varies, candidates should be prepared to devote approximately 15–25 hours per month, with additional time required during budget season, major projects, or special initiatives.

Serving on the City Council is a rewarding opportunity to make a meaningful impact on the future of Stillwater. The role requires thoughtful leadership, integrity, collaboration, and a commitment to serving the community. Following certification of the election, elected officials take the Oath of Office before assuming their duties at the first Council meeting in January.

Compensation

The Mayor and Council Members receive compensation as set by ordinance. Current rate for Mayor is \$750.00 per month plus benefits and Council Member rate is \$600.00 per month plus benefits.

CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

City Council meetings are conducted in accordance with Minnesota law and the City's adopted Rules of Procedure. Meetings are open to the public and provide opportunities for residents to observe, participate, and address the Council on matters of public interest.

Councilmembers receive agenda materials the Friday before each meeting and are expected to review the information in advance. During meetings, staff present agenda items, the Council asks questions, receives public input when appropriate, deliberates, and takes action. Some agenda items require a public hearing, which provides an opportunity for residents and other interested parties to comment before the Council makes a decision. Councilmembers are expected to consider all relevant information presented during the public process while making decisions that serve the best interests of the community.

BOARDS/COMMISSIONS

Citizen boards and commissions play an important role in Stillwater's local government. These advisory groups study topics in greater detail, gather public input, and help develop thoughtful recommendations before matters are considered by the City Council.

City Council members serve as liaisons to many of these groups, providing communication between the Council and the advisory body while gaining insight into issues before Council. The following is a summary of the City's boards and commissions.

Board/Commission	Purpose	Meeting Schedule	Composition
Charter Commission	Reviews the City Charter and recommends amendments.	3rd Monday (2x/year) 7:00 p.m.	9 members appointed by the Chief Judge
Downtown Parking Commission	Advises on downtown parking policies, planning, and improvements.	3rd Thursday 8:30 a.m.	7 business owners or resident members
Downtown Special Service District Management Board	Advises on downtown improvement projects and special services.	2nd Tuesday 8:30 a.m.	5 downtown property owners
Energy Action Commission	Promotes energy efficiency and sustainability initiatives.	1st Thursday 8:30 a.m.	5 resident members
Heritage Preservation Commission	Preserves the City's historic resources and reviews preservation matters.	3rd Wednesday 7:00 p.m.	7 resident members
Human Rights Commission	Promotes equity, inclusion, and human rights within the community.	2nd Monday 3:00 p.m.	7 resident members
Joint Cable Commission	Oversees cable television franchise agreements through a joint powers organization.	Quarterly, 3rd Monday 6:00 p.m.	1 councilmember 1 resident member
Library Board	Oversees the Stillwater Public Library and library policies.	2nd Tuesday 5:30 p.m.	9 resident members
Parks and Recreation Commission	Advises on parks, trails, recreation facilities, and programming.	4th Monday 7:00 p.m.	7 resident members

Planning Commission	Reviews development proposals, land use applications, zoning, subdivisions, and Comprehensive Plan implementation.	4th Wednesday 7:00 p.m.	7 resident members
Utilities Commission	Advises on water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater utility policies and infrastructure.	2nd Thursday 8:00 a.m.	5 resident members

CAMPAIGN FINANCIAL REPORTING

Candidates are responsible for complying with Minnesota campaign finance laws. All candidates must file a Campaign Financial Report Certification of Filing. Candidates who raise or spend \$750 or more must also file campaign finance reports according to the schedule below

Candidates and their committees are responsible for adherence to the provisions of Minnesota Statutes 211A and 211B regarding Campaign Financial Reporting and Fair Campaign Practices.

By law, all financial disclosures made by candidates are public documents. Reports submitted by candidates are posted online at <https://www.stillwatermn.gov/city-government/departments/administration/elections>

Disclosure form required for ALL CANDIDATES:

ALL candidates, regardless of the amount received or expended, and regardless of whether the candidate is elected, must file the Campaign Financial Report Certification of Filing. This report is due 7 days after the general election (November 10, 2026). Minnesota law imposes penalties for non-compliance with this requirement.

Disclosure forms required of CANDIDATES WHO RAISE OR SPEND \$750 OR MORE:

Candidates who raise or spend \$750 must begin filing Campaign Financial Reports. The form used for each of the following submissions is the same, but each report must be completed to include receipts and expenditure which occur during the specified time frame.

Report Type	Due Date	Period Covered
Initial Report	Within 14 days after a candidate or committee raises or spends more than \$750.00	
Pre-General Report	10 Days prior to the General Election (Friday, October 23, 2026)	From the last previously filed report to five days before the current report is due
Post-General Report	30 Days after the General Election (Thursday, December 3, 2026)	From the last previously filed report to five days before the current report is due
Annual Report	January 31 of each year (Friday, January 31, 2027)	From the last previously filed report through December 31
Final Report	Once all debts are paid and all assets in excess of \$100, in the aggregate, are disposed of	From the last previously filed report to the point of all debts paid and all assets in excess of \$100, in the aggregate, disposed of

Where to File Financial Reports

Financial Reports may be dropped off or submitted in person to the City Clerk at Stillwater City Hall or email to: bwolf@stillwatermn.gov

Notice of Failure to File

If a candidate or committee fails to file a report on the date it is due, the filing officer shall immediately notify the candidate or committee of the failure to file. If a report is not filed within ten (10) days after the notification, the filing officer is required to file a complaint under section M.S. 211B.32 with the Minnesota Office of Administrative Hearings.

FAIR CAMPAIGN PRACTICES

Minnesota Statute 211B governs fair campaign practices. Candidates must comply with regulations concerning campaign contributions and spending, Election Day campaigning, advertising, influencing voters, and other campaign activities. Questions? Call the Minnesota Secretary of State 651-215-1440, or Washington County Elections Division at 651-430-6790 or the City of Stillwater at 651-430-8800.

CAMPAIGNING INFORMATION

Automatic Dialing Device Laws

Automatic dialing devices sometimes used in campaigning are regulated by the State. A memorandum from the MN Attorney General's Office is included in the packet, providing guidance to candidates, political campaigns, political parties, political committees, and others concerning Minnesota's automatic dialing-announcing device law.

Campaign Signs

Minnesota statutes (M.S. 211B.045) and local ordinances regulate the placement of political campaign signs which is a vital part of any candidate's campaign. Contact the clerk in any community where you will campaign if you plan to post political signs.

Placing signs on State or County right-of-way is prohibited. Minnesota Statute 160.27 prohibits advertisements on highway rights-of-way. A letter from the Minnesota Department of Transportation is included in the packet. If signs are to be placed on private property, permission must be obtained from the landowner. Any signs that are in the highway right-of-way will be removed. Visit the MN Department of Transportation website at https://www.dot.state.mn.us/govrel/rw_signs.html for more information.

City of Stillwater Political Sign Regulations

Political signs shall not require a permit and are allowed in every zoning district. However, they shall not be construed as relieving the owner of the sign from the responsibility of its erection, maintenance and compliance with the other provisions of City Code or any other law regulating the same. No signs may be erected or temporarily placed within any street right-of-way or upon public lands or easements without approval from the Community Development Director or designee.

The maximum sign size in residential and General Commercial (CA) districts is six square feet in area with a maximum height of four feet. The maximum size in all other districts is 35 square feet in area. Signs may be posted 46 days before the state primary election, in a state general election year until 10 days following the state general election. Political signs must be removed 10 days after the general election for which they are intended.

The city may at any time and without notice remove signs which have been installed on public property or within public right-of-way or easement without approval. The sign owner may retrieve the signs: from a designated impound area at the city within 15 days from the date of removal. After 15 days, the city will dispose of the sign. The city shall not be liable for any damage to removed sign.

Campaign Tools

The Office of Minnesota Secretary of State has several campaign tools. See forms available in the packet or online at <https://www.sos.mn.gov/election-administration-campaigns/election-administration/campaign-filing-packet/>

Map Order Form – Maps showing legislative, county, city, township, and school district boundaries are available from the State. A City of Stillwater Ward map is included in the packet.

Precinct Finder and Polling Place Lists containing voting districts by street name and house number. Voters can also look up their polling place online at <https://pollfinder.sos.mn.us/>

Registered Voter Lists contains voter registration information including name, address, telephone number and voting history.

Accepted Absentee Ballot List Request contains a list of voters with accepted absentee ballots in upcoming state primaries and general elections.

ELECTION RESULTS

Unofficial election results are reported by the Minnesota Secretary of State on Election Night as vote totals are received from local election officials. Results for Stillwater municipal races are available on the Minnesota Secretary of State's website at www.sos.mn.gov.

Election Night results are unofficial until they have been reviewed and certified by the appropriate Canvassing Board in accordance with Minnesota law. The Canvassing Board verifies vote totals, reviews any necessary election materials, and officially certifies the election results.

Once the election results have been certified, the City Clerk will notify successful candidates and provide information regarding the Oath of Office, orientation, and the first City Council meeting of the new term. Newly elected officials begin their four-year term on January 4, 2027 and are sworn in at 7 p.m. on January 5, 2027.

QUESTIONS? WE'RE HERE TO HELP

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Stillwater, MN 55082

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