

HB 163 -- ELECTIONS

This bill changes the laws regarding elections. In its main provisions, the bill:

(1) Allows a council member in a third class city to serve a four-year term if the city passes an ordinance or a majority of the voters approve a proposal on the ballot. The four-year terms will begin with those elected to the council after the adoption of the ordinance or the approval of the ballot question (Section 77.030, RSMo);

(2) Allows certain third class cities organized under Sections 78.010 - 78.400 to eliminate, by order or ordinance, any primary election for the office of mayor and councilman that is currently held in February. A person wishing to become a candidate for one of these offices must file a signed statement of candidacy with the city clerk in order to be placed on the ballot in the next municipal election for the office (Section 78.090);

(3) Prohibits a city in which a hospital is located that is organized and operated under Chapter 96, that has not received money from the city during the prior 20 years, and is licensed by the Department of Health and Senior Services for 200 or more beds from selling, leasing, or otherwise transferring all or substantially all of the property without a resolution adopted by at least two-thirds of the members of the board of trustees, a majority vote of the city council, and the approval of the voters of the city. If voters fail to approve the measure, the question may not be resubmitted to the voters sooner than 12 months from the date of the last question, after the adoption of another resolution by at least two-thirds of the board of trustees, and a subsequent vote by a majority of the city council to submit the question to the voters again. The criteria for the sale of the property, the payment of interest and principal on outstanding debt, and the use of assets donated to the hospital are specified in the bill (Section 96.229);

(4) Specifies that if there is not a candidate for an open position on a county 911 emergency services board, an election will not be held for that position, and it must be considered vacant and be filled under the provisions of Section 190.339. If there is only one candidate for each open position, an election will not be held, and the candidate or candidates must assume office at the same time and in the same manner as if elected (Section 190.335); and

(5) Makes the public administrator for the City of St. Louis an appointed position. Currently, all public administrators must be

elected by the voters in the county or city in which he or she serves. The administrator must be appointed by a majority of the judges of the 22nd Judicial Circuit. The qualifications and requirements for the position must meet those for an elected public administrator (Sections 473.730 - 473.737).

The provisions of the bill regarding the sale, lease, or transfer of the property of specified hospitals contain an emergency clause.