

10 Minute Supervisor Trainings



May 2020

SUPERVISOR ELECTIONS

Conservation district supervisors serve a term of 4 years. Supervisor elections are held every two years, with three supervisors being elected one time and four the next. In the 2020 election, 4 supervisor positions will be up for election. At the end of that term, it is time to go through the process of re-election. This 10-minute training is going to focus on the process of election, filling unexpired terms and answer some commonly asked questions.

According to KRS 262.210 supervisors must present a nominating petition to the county clerk in the county where the term is being sought. The petition is only available through the county clerk's office or on the Secretary of State's website. The petitions found on the DOC website cannot be used for this purpose. The petition must include the signatures of at least 25 registered voters in the county, although it is recommended that you get more. This petition must be presented by the filing deadline. This year the deadline for filing is June 2, 2020. The candidate must pay the county filing fee of \$20. No district funds can be used in the filing of election petitions.

How the positions are filled depends on how many petitions are received.

- If more petitions are filed than positions are available (5 or more in 2020), the county clerk then presents them to the voters in the general election to be on the ballot.
- If the number of petitions for only the number of supervisors to be elected are filed (4 in 2020), the county clerk will certify the election of supervisors to the Soil and Water Conservation Commission without there being anything on the ballot.
- When there are not enough petitions turned in to cover the vacancies (3 or fewer in 2020), this leaves the window open for write in candidates.
- Write in candidates are physically written in on the ballot. Only certified names can be counted. To be certified as a "Write In" you must file a declaration of intent within 10 days preceding the election (KRS 265).
- A supervisor's term begins January 1st following the election. A supervisor is not qualified to take office until they have taken the oath/signed the oath of office card and returned it to the Division of Conservation.

Due to COVID-19 county clerk offices currently are closed. The deadline for filing petitions has not changed. As guidance from the Governor's office becomes available, your field representative will distribute it. In the meantime, please continue to stay healthy at home.

VACANCIES

In the case where a supervisor must resign or a vacancy may occur, the board can nominate a citizen to fill that term. The citizen must complete a nominating petition and be approved by the State Soil and Water Commission. When that term expires, that individual must file a petition to be elected.

Steps to fill a vacancy

1. Supervisor resigns in writing, if possible, with an explanation of why they can no longer serve.
2. District board looks for new supervisor and approaches people to apply. While the district is not legally required to advertise the open position, they should not be secretive about the process. For instance, they can put it on their Facebook page or put a notice in the newspaper. They should consider the makeup of their district and make sure they are looking for someone who will represent the district well.
3. District reviews all petitions received and votes to recommend one person to the SWCC.
4. District sends resignation, all petitions received, and a letter telling the commission which person they recommend to conservation@ky.gov (subject: supervisor vacancy).
5. SWCC appoints a person to the board.
6. Person fills out Oath of Office card and becomes a supervisor.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

- ▶ Supervisors must reside in the county.
- ▶ Supervisors can campaign like any other elected official.
- ▶ No district funds can be used to campaign or for the filing fee. Petitions will be disqualified if at least 25 signatures are not from registered voters in that county.
- ▶ Supervisors cannot hold any other elected office but can remain the board while running for an elected position.
- ▶ Names are publicly "drawn" to determine the order of appearance on the ballot.
- ▶ Supervisors are not required by law to attend a mandatory number of meetings per year but some districts have set a limit to which they can request that a supervisor resign.
- ▶ Supervisors must take an "Oath of Office" and be officially sworn in after being elected.
- ▶ It is extremely important to have a good mix of supervisors; men, women, young and old, from different areas of the county however there are no specifications. The ideal supervisor is someone who cares about conserving our natural resources and can devote the time needed for monthly meetings and district functions.