September 29, 2023

**You want to run for office. Have you thought about ….**

*As you make your decision as to whether you will file to run or not for elected office consider the items below. The list may seem overwhelming – it’s not meant to be.  This list is intended to help you with your thought process and* ***some aspects*** *of running a campaign.*

1. Research the office: know the duties of the office, the responsibility of the office, does it have requirements such as residency, how long does the term last, why do you want this office, why would you be better than anyone else, what do you bring to the table, do you have the time it will take to devote to the office and is that something you have discussed with your family, friends, job.
2. All candidates must complete a financial disclosure form:

Special District file a Form 1

Form 1: <https://www.ethics.state.fl.us/FinancialDisclosure/DownloadAForm.aspx>

All other candidates file a Form 6 (including city candidates)

Form 6: <https://www.ethics.state.fl.us/FinancialDisclosure/DownloadAForm.aspx>

Look over the form. Do you want to disclose your personal finances to the degree that is required? If not, don’t run. A failure to file a true and complete financial disclosure will cause you fines that will be paid with personal funds.

1. If you are running to sit on a board you should attend as many of their meetings as possible. Learn the needs and what you can contribute.
2. Talk to the voters asking what they think of the seat you want to run for and what do they (the voters) want from the office. What are the current strengths and needs of that office in their opinion? You may be surprised they may not want what you want.
3. Talk to your family, friends, your employer and ask others. What are their thoughts on you running for office, winning that office, and fulfilling the requirements of that office? Think about any hardship that responsibility may cause you and your family.
4. Do you have the time for the campaign, attending candidate functions, getting out to talk to the voters, attending meetings, held by the office you are running for? Will you be able to get away from your current job?
5. Do you have volunteers you can rely on? Warning, people will say they will help but when it comes to what you want them to do, they may not be available. Ask volunteers: what they would like to do, when they will be available to do that job (nights or weekends), how long would they be available to volunteer, a week, a month, until the end. Keep notes on the facts.
6. Get a campaign email that you can give out to people and put on business card, mailer, ads, the Elections website.
7. Start a calendar for campaigning. Think about what you want to get done. Research opportunities and events in the community up and down the Keys. Time will fly by; a calendar will help keep you focused.
8. Be aware of the 2 weeks of Early Voting. Early Voting starts on a Monday and ends on the 2nd Saturday, this includes one Sunday. Hours are from 8:30 to 5:00 p.m. daily. There are 5 locations. This is a great time to get voters in to vote for you. Do you know anyone that needs a ride to Early Vote? You may want to have volunteers ready to drive voters to the polls.
9. Talk to your county party chairperson. They are dedicated people who know the political temperature.
10. You will need to have transportation to get you to all the functions. Keep in mind if you are running for a county seat, Monroe County is 130 miles long.
11. Write a 30 second, 90 second and a 3-minute speech for speaking engagements.
12. Budget: Research other candidates that ran for the office in the past to see what kind of budget they had. How much did they collect and how did they spend their funds? Are you self-funding your campaign or will you work on collecting donations? How much will you need? Look at the Supervisor of Elections web site: “Candidate & Finances -Elections 2012 – Current” [www.keyselections.org/Candidate-Info/Candidates-Finances-Elections-2012-Current](http://www.keyselections.org/Candidate-Info/Candidates-Finances-Elections-2012-Current)
13. Budget: Will you be ordering yard and car signs? Research where to buy the signs. Look at past candidate filings. Where did they buy their signs? How many and what size? What will be your campaign color? Think about signs you saw in the past and which ones stood out to you as a good design. Don’t forget to put the disclaimer on the sign.
14. Budget: Mailings. Will you be mailing to all voters or those who have recently voted? Will you be mailing to those voters who requested Vote by Mail ballots? If you are mailing to Vote by Mail voters, you may want to start researching Mail Houses that can take the data and put it on your mail pieces for you. Check the Elections website for more information on Vote by Mail ballots: Vote by Mail (formally known as Absentee) Ballot Q. & A. <https://www.keyselections.org/Become-a-Candidate/Candidate-Q-A> January 2019, county wide there would be 52,785 labels or if you sent one label to each household county wide there would be 40,542 labels.
15. Donations: Who can you ask? Will you ask, or will you have a volunteer handle that for you? If you are going to have a volunteer, who will that be? Think hard. Are they able and will they live up to your expectations?
16. Will you be your own treasurer, or will you have someone take that job? Treasurers must file reports on time, or you will be fined, and fines are paid from personal funds. Every penny you take in must be reported and every penny spent must be reported, along with in-kind contributions. You must balance at the end of the election to the penny.
17. You must file the DS-DE 9 with the Supervisor of Elections prior to accepting any contributions or collecting any campaign petitions. Complete remaining paperwork at the Elections office.

<https://dos.myflorida.com/elections/forms-publications/forms/>

1. Will you be paying the qualifying fee or collecting candidate petitions? See the elections website for information on petitions such as how many were needed in the past: [**Candidate Petition Process:**](https://www.keyselections.org/Portals/Monroe/Typed%20paper%20links/Petitions%20Process.docx)
2. If you are collecting petitions do not wait until you have them all to turn them in. Turn in small bundles at a time. We will be able to give you a count of good, bad, and how many more are needed.
3. Prior to turning in petitions, check to make sure that they are completely filled in. Petitions that do not contain all the needed information will be rejected and that voter cannot sign another petition for you.
4. Social Media: Will you be setting up a Facebook Page or Web Site? Are you able to do it yourself or will you need to find a volunteer to help you?
5. Have a way to be able to keep notes, reminder, phone numbers and other information you may be given by a voter or volunteer.
6. Will you be walking neighborhoods? Will you have information to give to people you visit or leave at the door of those not home.
7. July 4th, up and down the Keys, there are celebrations. Where will you be and what will you be doing?
8. The day prior to the Election and Election Day. Where will you be, what will you be doing?
9. Election night after the polls close at 7:00 p.m., the results will be televised from the Historical Truman School Harvey Government Center in Key West. If you plan to be on air, think about what you will say elected or not.
10. Will you have a party to wait for results or after the results come in?
11. All Financial Records must be kept for the length of the term of office of that which you are running for.

***Final thoughts:***

1. Be aware no one or very few will tell you they are not voting for you.
2. People will tell you they cannot sign your petitions because they are not registered or any number of other excuses. Take it in stride and move on.
3. You will not get all the votes.
4. Do whatever you can do so that win or lose you will be ok with yourself the day after the election.

Make the best of the adventure. Make friends, make memories worth remembering and enjoy the experience.