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SPORTS/14

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IN VOTERS' HANDS NOW



PHOTOS BY MATT ERICKSON/STAFF

During the lead-up to the Feb. 28 Basehor recall election, signs have sprouted along roadways, and city council members Iris Dysart and Dennis Mertz (pictured during a town-hall meeting at Basehor Community Library on Sunday) and Mayor Terry Hill (pictured delivering his 2011 State of the City address) have stated their cases for staying in office.

Recall questions answered as election day approaches

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Editor's note: Basehor residents will vote Tuesday, Feb. 28, on whether to recall Basehor Mayor Terry Hill and Basehor City Council members Dennis Mertz and Iris Dysart. In this feature, the Sentinel answers questions voters may have about the recall vote.

Q: What will the ballot look like?

A: The ballot will contain three yes-or-no questions, one each for the mayor and the two council members. If you want to remove an official from office, vote YES under his or her name. If you want the official to stay in office, vote NO.

For example, the ballot question about Hill will read: "Shall Terry Hill be recalled from the office of Basehor City Mayor?" If more people vote "yes," then Hill will be removed from office; if more vote "no," he will remain as mayor.

Q: Why are we having a recall vote?

A: State law allows for residents to petition for a vote to remove elected officials from office on the grounds of a felony conviction, other misconduct or failure to perform their duties. To start the process of recalling a local elected official, a committee of three registered voters must submit to the county a petition that includes grounds for the officer's recall, and the county attorney must determine that those grounds are sufficient.

In Basehor, one committee of three voters got approval for petitions to recall Mertz and Dysart, and another group gained approval for a petition to recall Hill. Each of those petitions attracted enough signatures (according to a formula based on past voter turnout in city council elections),

COUNCIL MEMBERS RESPOND

Basehor City Council members Dennis Mertz and Iris Dysart responded to accusations and criticisms during a town-hall meeting Sunday. Read about it on [page 3](#).

so Leavenworth County scheduled a recall vote.

Leavenworth County Clerk Janet Klasinski placed all three recall questions on one ballot in order to save money, rather than having separate votes for each officer.

Q: What are the "grounds" for the recall of the Basehor mayor and council members?

A: The committee seeking to recall Mertz and Dysart claims the council members had discussions outside of public city council meetings regarding their vote to fire former city administrator Mark Loughry last September. Such discussions would violate the Kansas Open Meetings Act. Mertz and Dysart say they did not break any laws, and Mertz has said the city council discussed matters related to Loughry's eventual firing during a lawful executive session earlier that month.

The grounds for Hill's recall are also connected to Loughry. The committee seeking the mayor's recall has accused him of improperly revising Loughry's

SEE SEVERAL, PAGE 8

Q: WHERE AND WHEN CAN I VOTE?

A: The election is Tuesday. There will be only one polling place: Father Quinlan Hall at Holy Angels Catholic Church, near 154th Street and Leavenworth Road. Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Q: WHAT ARE THE NEW VOTING RULES REGARDING PHOTO IDENTIFICATION?

A: The new rules, approved by the Kansas Legislature last year, require every voter to present a photo ID at the polling place. Eligible IDs include driver's license, U.S. passport, military ID or student ID cards from colleges or universities in Kansas. The Basehor recall vote will be the first in Leavenworth County to be affected by the voter ID law. For more information about the requirements, visit the Kansas Secretary of State's website at sos.ks.gov, or call (800)262-VOTE.

INSIDE

CALENDAR	4
CLASSIFIEDS	19-24
DEATHS	5
OUR TOWN	18
SPORTS	14-17
VOICES	6
WEATHER	2

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