

Minnehaha County Election Review Committee

February 20, 2015 Meeting

Meeting Notes:

Attendees: Lorie Hogstad, Sue Roust, Julie Pearson (by phone), Kea Warne, Deb Elofson, Bruce Danielson, Joel Arends

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of Agenda

Motion passed unanimously.

III. Approval of Minutes from meeting on February 6, 2015

Motion passed unanimously.

IV. Opportunity for Public Comment

Joy Howe, Brandon resident expressed concerns about the use of vote tabulation machines to count election ballots. She equated the use of vote tabulation machines to counting ballots in secret. She would like to see ballots counted by hand at the precincts.

Dan Daily thanked the committee for its work.

V. Auto-Mark Demonstration

Auditor Bob Litz demonstrated how the machines are used. There were questions if the machine makes an electronic recording of the ballot. Sue Roust made the comment that the Auto-Mark machine is "a glorified pencil." Its only function is to assist voters in filling out the ballot. Minnehaha County purchased the current Auto-Mark machines in 2006.

VI. E-Poll Books Demonstration

Brian Mortimore from ScytI addressed the committee. E-Poll Books only replace the check-in books that election workers use to check a voter in and determine which ballot they should receive. The software also gives an election administrator a great amount of information about activities at that polling location during Election Day. The machine used in this demonstration is the same model the city used in its most recent election.

There was a discussion about a time in the late in the afternoon during the most recent City of Sioux Falls election when the e-Poll Books experienced a problem synchronizing with each other. The issue was referred to as a broadcast storm. This took several hours to resolve. It affected the way check-in information was recorded for 30 voters. It gave the appearance these 30 individuals could have checked in twice, and 3 could have voted twice. Brian Mortimore told the committee the company has made changes to prevent the same issue from happening again.

The broadcast storm was caused by e-Poll Books that were turned off and turned back on when they should have been left on all day. When those e-Poll Books were turned back on, they sent out a signal requesting to update with all data gathered by every other e-Poll Books while they were off. Multiple machines made this request at the same time. The amount of data that had to be transferred to satisfy all the requests overwhelmed the system's capabilities. Following that incident the system has been changed so each e-Poll Books transfers data to one central server instead of very other machine. The expectation is this will eliminate the overload of data that was experienced in that instance.

There were other questions about issues at the Faith Baptist Church voting location. At the end of the day the number of ballots collected didn't match the number of voters checked in. It appeared the e-Poll Books were not able to keep up with the number of voters. There were a total of 4,267 votes counted at that location. Approximately 3200 were tracked according to Sue Roust Vote Center supervisor. The committee made it clear these were problems strictly related to the e-Poll Books, not with actual cast ballots.

Public Comment: Laura Hubble - because there was a 1000 vote difference at the Faith Baptist Church location, in theory, could a voter who checked in during this broadcast storm vote multiple times? It would have been possible.

There was a question about how much technical support the City of Sioux Falls had from Hart Intercivic on Election Day. There was no assistance in Sioux Falls. The company had representatives in Pierre, but not Sioux Falls. However they were available with phone support. Lorie Hogstad told the committee that the training the city and election workers received was extensive. Even if a voter were to check in twice because of the broadcast storm, that would be noted on a collision report.

Chairman Danielson asked if an audit of the election process was requested, could the signatures on the voter registration card and the signature on the e-Poll Books be compared to verify that the same person signed? Individual e-Poll Book signatures are not recorded. The signature on the e-Poll Books is simply verification that a voter is who they say they are and has the right to vote.

The committee discussed the fact that the broadcast storm issues have now been fixed, and the software updated to insure the same problems will not happen again. Also, Sue Roust reminded the committee that all discussions in Minnehaha County regarding the potential use of e-Poll Books have been in the context of precinct voting locations, not vote centers. Even if the broadcast storm issue had not been fixed, Minnehaha County would not face the same challenges because vote centers are not used or being considered.

VII. Total Vote/B-Pro/ERM Report Discussion

Total Vote is a statewide voter registration system. It went online in 2012 and handles all voter information. Depending on what each county wants to input, it can include only voter history or much more information. Total Vote must be used for all state-wide elections, but its use is not a requirement for local elections.

There was a question about the specifics of the Total Vote database. Previously the information had been stored on an AS400 system. Total Vote is hosted on a different network than the AS400 was. Some of the data is on the state system and some is hosted on the county level.

Committee Chairman Bruce Danielson submitted a written report summarizing what he discovered while looking into the data side of the voting process:

It is Mr. Danielson's opinion that many weaknesses exist in the way voter related data has been compiled, processed, updated and saved. "Every office involved with this data played its part in the process failures." Mr. Danielson reported that his natural skepticism of modern voting systems brought him to the Minnehaha County resolution board for the first time in 2012.

Mr. Danielson detailed his experiences working with city, county and state voter information over the past several years. He purchased City of Sioux Falls voter lists in 2012 and 2013 as part of work related to petition drives. Within that data he found information that caused him to take a deeper look at the data side of the

election process. He continued to be concerned by what he found. In February, 2014 Mr. Danielson attempted, unsuccessfully, to share his concerns with the South Dakota Secretary of State's Office. Using data that has now been provided by the Secretary of State's Office, Mr. Danielson now estimate that at least 1087 repairs have been performed on data he found errors within.

Based on this experience, Chairman Danielson submitted a list of 18 questions he hopes to have answered. These questions relate to a voter purge in 2013, database maintenance procedures, voter registration, vote center data and the street master program. Mr. Danielson concluded his report by stating his belief that every office he has dealt with shares some of the blame for the issues he has identified.

Lorie Hogstad pointed out that the City of Sioux Falls does not enter voter information. The city receives that information from the state, Minnehaha and Lincoln Counties.

There was additional discussion about address information that was changed between the time it was uploaded from Minnehaha County into the state's "Melissa" system and then came back to Minnehaha County for verification. Three major dates of data sharing between Minnehaha County and the Secretary of State's Office were shared: December 12, 2012, January 7, 2013 and February 14, 2013. There was a discussion of whether a top-down "fix" initiated by the Secretary of State's Office is more appropriate or should it be undertaken by counties. Kea Warne reminded the committee counties are in charge of voter files and the state can't change that information.

Julie Pearson told the committee Total Vote is a repository for information compiles by counties. Each county inputs their information and each county auditor can input that information however they choose. Total Vote is not represented as a total and complete system until it's finalized at the county auditor's level. If two different counties describe the same thing in two different ways, that's their right.

Julie Pearson further stated it's not appropriate to blame the Secretary of State's Office for issues that relate to the way individual counties input their voter information. It's also not realistic to think the state will ever get to a point of total uniformity in how counties record voter information.

There was a discussion about issues that were discovered in the most recent City of Sioux Falls election related to directional designation of voter addresses. When

address changes are made in the Melissa system, do County Auditor's see a report of that change? Auditors do see that information highlighted on each voter's individual profile. However, if a mass conversion is needed, is there a single report that identifies all changes that were made? That would be helpful.

ERM Report:

Managing this has been the responsibility of the Secretary of State's Office. Now, that role has been turned over to County Auditors.

VIII. Old Business

None

IX. New Business

None

X. Adjournment