Board of Supervisors Memorandum

August 5, 2014

Election Integrity Commission Recommendation to Purchase Precinct Scanners in Addition to the Procurement of a New Election Central Count System

Introduction

You should be in receipt of a July 18, 2014 memorandum from the co-chair of the Election Integrity Commission (EIC). The memorandum recommends the County purchase new election equipment that includes precinct scanners. A Request for Proposal (RFP) has already been issued for a new Central Count election tabulation system. The RFP included precinct level scanners as a possible option to be added in the future. A proposal has been received and is presently being evaluated.

The County's move toward Central Count-based tabulation, rather than precinct-based tabulation, has been motivated by the continuing trend toward early voting by mail. During the 2012 General Election, almost 70 percent of votes in Pima County were cast by mail-in ballot or at a Recorder's early voting site. Based on the trend over the last few years, we anticipate that by the 2016 voting cycle no more than 20 percent of the voters will vote at the polling places on Election Day.

The EIC's recommendation would cost the County an additional $ 1.8 million just to purchase the precinct scanners and related ballot boxes and supplies. In addition to these costs, the County would have additional expenses for personnel implementing the scanners in each polling place, as well as costs of warehousing and transportation of polling place scanners. The additional $1.8 million for purchase of precinct scanners is not budgeted or available and exceeds the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) federal funding that can be used to purchase new election equipment. The County has $1.15 million in HAVA grant money available for the purchase of election equipment, of which about $890,000 will be used to purchase the Central Count tabulation system currently under consideration.

The logic of the EIC is that ballots should be scanned at the polls to prevent any tampering with ballots that could occur from their polling place transport to the central tabulation location. This is despite: a) the ballots being deposited in a locked and sealed box; b) ballots being transported by two or more individuals from different political parties; c) tamper- proof seals being installed on the ballot boxes; and d) the recorded chain of custody of the ballots between the polling place and the central tabulation location. Additionally, ballots cast at the polling places will be subject to a hand-count audit. The removal of polling place scanners is being piloted at 25 polling places during the 2014 elections to determine any concerns that need to be addressed before moving fully to a Central Count.

Recommendation

I do not agree with the recommendation of the EIC. I recommend the Board of Supervisors continue to proceed with acquisition of the new central tabulation election equipment as planned.

Respectfully submitted,

C.H. Huckelberry
County Administrator

CHH/anc – July 25, 2014

Attachment

c: Ellen Wheeler, Assistant County Administrator
Brad Nelson, Director, Elections Department
Chair and Members, Elections Integrity Commission

ELECTION INTEGRITY COMMISSION

PIMA COUNTY ARIZONA

TO: Honorable Chair and Members
Pima County Board of Supervisors

FROM: Barbara Tellman, Co-Chair
Election Integrity Commission

DATE: July 18, 2014

RE: Recommendation to Not Proceed at this time with Procurement of New Election System Equipment unless Precinct Scanners are included.

The Procurement Department of the Pima County Government issued an RFP for purchase of new election equipment. Evaluation has been done by a procurement committee, including two members of the Election Integrity Commission. A recommendation will come to the Board of Supervisors soon.

By majority vote (5-2), the Election Integrity Commission recommends that the Pima County Board of Supervisors not proceed with the purchase of the ES&S EVS central count system as currently proposed without the inclusion of precinct scanners. The majority believes that precinct scanners must remain an integral part of elections and that the decision to purchase new equipment should include both.

Sincerely,

Barbara Tellman

Barbara Tellman, Election Integrity Commission Co-chair