Absent Voter Counting Board

Consider the following:

- How many absentee ballots are you expecting to receive?
- High Speed vs. Individual Scanners
- How many workers/election inspectors do you need to hire / train?
- Will you be prepared for a post-election audit(s) / RLA?

Training

- Who will be conducting the training? How many session are needed?
  - Population of less than 10,000 = County (MCL 168.33)
  - Population of 10,000 or more = Local or the County
  - Trainers must attend BOE training school once every two years (MCL 168.33)
  - More workers needed. Number of AVCB. More ballots require more workers.

- Impact of COVID-19
  - Social Distancing = smaller in-person training sessions
  - Virtual / Online Training (Zoom, Google Meet, etc.)

- Topics
  - Ballot Opening / Processing
  - High Speed/Scanning Equipment
  - Online Adjudication
  - Closing Procedures (Transferring Results/Paper Poll Books)
  - Storage of Ballots/Seals

Training Videos

- Videos Currently Available:
  - State of Michigan Bureau of Elections
  - Equipment Vendors
  - Non-Profit Organizations

- Create Your Own:
  - Purchase training software modules
  - Using Power Point
  - Using Your Smart Phone
**Staffing**

- Use Smaller AVCB Teams:
  - 3-5 Workers per team

- Have Specialized Workers/Teams in AVCB:
  - AVCB Supervisor
  - AVCB Chairperson
  - Duplicators
  - Letter Openers

- With projected light turn out in the precinct considered bringing some of your good experience precinct workers into the AVCB.

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**Ideal AVCB Work Flow**

- **Proactive Planning**
  - **Quick Tips**:
    - Utilize Postage machine to Date/Time stamp ballots
    - Utilize high-speed letter openers
    - Utilize color-coding as much as possible
  - **Organization of AV Ballots**:
    - By District/Precinct
    - By Date Received
    - In bundles of 10
  - **Reconcile Daily**
    - Helps to avoid any potential problems/Issues
    - Ensure numbers are "solid" on a daily basis

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Using Tabulators / AVCB

- Less Upfront Cost
  - Can pay for multiple tabulators for the cost of a single high speed.
- More Familiar to Workers Transitioning from Precinct
  - Easier on Staff as it's only one type of equipment to train and service.
- Slower processing time, requires more machines/more workers/space

Using High Speed Scanners / AVCB

- Faster Processing
  - Approximately three (3) minutes to process 50 ballots vs. 5 – 15 minutes per 50 ballot on a tabulator
- Fewer Workers (High Speed vs Tabulator)
  - Fewer tabulators = Ability to assign more workers to AV ballot opening teams
- Online Adjudication
  - Fewer ballots require duplication

Potential Problems

- Building Voter Trust
  - How to combat the misinformation on the AV process;
- Increased problem ballots in August.
  - For a lot of voters this is their first time voting by mail, unsure of the process;
  - August Primary's typically result in a large number of Cross-Over votes in precinct;
Closing out the AVCB

- Start filling out paperwork early
  - Utilize spreadsheet / form
  - Labels – for AVCB team signatures
  - Paper Poll Book

- Utilize chair people/table captains
  - To keep processed ballots organized
  - To complete paperwork and store ballots

- Storage of AV envelopes and applications
  - Post election audits / RLA
  - FOIA

Creating an AVCB

- Election commission
  - General Law: Clerk, supervisor, treasurer (MCL 168.26)
  - Charter township: Clerk and two trustees (MCL 42.2)

- Determine location
  - Must be sequestered
  - Bathroom facilities
  - Space to accommodate equipment and supplies

- Appoint inspectors & set start time
  - Minimum requirement of 3. 5 is recommended
  - At least one inspector from each major political party
  - Designate a hapless person
  - Establish start time
Lessons Learned – Creating an AVCB

✓ Easier than I thought
  • Process outlined in Chapter 6 of the Election Officials Accreditation Manual
  • Hourly number checks were much easier (EPB > Apps to Vote > Tabulator number)

✓ Less Stress on Precinct Inspectors
  • Precinct Inspectors can focus on ballots issued in the precinct = same process throughout the day
  • AVCB can focus on processes for absentee ballot processing

✓ End of Night Wrap Up
  • No duplication of ballots in the precinct at the end of the night
  • Made the End of Night Process in precinct much easier and faster
  • Fewer mistakes made

Questions?