Notes/Comments from November 2019 Election processing

1) Note: This was the first election in which the new machines were used. The machines, the opening and closing steps, the election night review, the adjudication process, the reports, were new to everyone (election judges and poll workers, Greg/Kim/Glenda, Election Board).

2) Space – Room (Pi room) used for review was crowded (3 staff members, 2 support team from vendor, 3 election board members, 3 computers, projector, desks, tables). Additionally, electrical cords were plugged into receptables causing the need to step over them - about a foot. The room is secure and locked at all times. We do not want to compromise security.

   a. Suggestions:
      i. Configure the pi room differently. Are all the tables needed? Can the computers be set up so that they are more easily viewable to the 'auditors'? It was difficult to see what was being processed on the two smaller computers.
      ii. Move the review to the training room. Leave the main computer in the pi room. Move the smaller laptops and scanners to the training room. Use the training room projector/big screen for viewing/auditing results. One downside to this is that the precinct envelopes, which need to be kept securely, would need to be shuttled between the training room and Pie Room.
      iii. Extend the side wall of the Pie Room to make a bigger room. Behind it is a cubicle, which is not used regularly. That wall is drywall, which could be moved without compromising structure. There would be a one-time cost to do this.

3) As noted above, the process was new this year. Before the next election, there may also be some additional process changes.

   a. During the adjudication and audit process, it would be helpful for the Staff/Vendor to describe what is being done in each process step (what precinct is being reviewed, what report or information we are viewing on the screen, what two documents or reports are being compared, etc). This will help the Election Board to feel more comfortable with the audit that is being performed.

4) Election night procedures
   a. Review the written instructions. Update as needed, ensuring notes on envelopes and general instructions are consistent.
   b. Absentee ballots –
      i. There was some confusion in some precincts with the absentee ballots with regards to counts. One source of confusion was that the ballot was 2 pages, and there were a couple of instances in which voters did not return both pages.
      ii. There is not a final ruling yet as to questions with the new Absentee ballot law. The Absentee process will change before the next election and so Greg and team will need to create a new process for the poll workers to follow. With the new law, if a voter requests an absentee ballot, then that voter will not be allowed to vote in person. Previously, all ballots – except for military – had to be back to the government office by 5PM the Friday before the election. For the 2020 primary, Absentee ballots will be allowed to come back through Election Day 8PM. Poll workers may not have final counts of returned ballots.

5) There are several steps in the post-poll close process.
   a. The election judges return to the county government building and are given a number when checked in
   b. When their number is called, the precincts' envelope packs are reviewed by an audit team (comprised of a solicitor, an election board member, and Nancy).
   c. When the envelope review has been completed, the envelope pack is taken to the Pi room (secure room) for another team to upload the USB flash drive.

d. Once the report from the flash drive is uploaded and confirmed, the precinct report is printed and posted for public viewing.

6) Steps c and d in # 5 above are quicker to process than in previous elections. That audit team completed their processing and often had to wait for another precinct envelope pack to process. We had a backlog in the election night review process (step b in # 5 above). With 26 precincts, many election judges had to wait quite a while for their number to be called. The last precincts were not complete until about 11PM.
   a. Suggestion: have 2 teams for step b above. This means that we would need another solicitor for the evening (approximately 3 hours). Doing this would help to alleviate the long wait.

7) Delivery of equipment – Today, it is the responsibility of the judges to pick up the equipment from the county office and set it up in the precinct. (Exception: the large trash can size containers are delivered the day before by government workers). The machines weigh about 28 pounds.
   a. Suggestion: Have county workers deliver the equipment to the precinct offices on Monday before the election, and pick up on Wednesday. Some other counties do this. This would take the responsibility (and load) off of the poll workers. Machines at the precincts would have to be stored in secure locked areas.
   b. Question: Could this compromise the integrity of the results? The Election Officials/judges pull the USB drive from the machines as part of the close process. Could someone tamper with the equipment left behind at the polling locations? Election results are still stored in the machine and could be retrieved again if the USB flash drive is corrupted somehow during the close process.

8) Machines – generally, there was no big concerns raised by voters regarding the machines or the setup.
   a. There were a couple of comments about the brightness of the screen, which could be adjusted as needed. Note, the brightness returns to default after a voter completes their ballot. So, it may need to be adjusted again for the next voter. Additionally, the screen angle can be adjusted to help with lighting.
   b. There were a couple of comments about the proximity of the machines to each other, but the machine screens are designed so that they are not readable at an angle.
   c. Some voters requested chairs to sit, which were provided as needed.

9) Machine labeling – USB flash drives are not labeled. It may be helpful to label the USB flash drive and the machine with an identifier/number. That way, it will be easier to identify/locate the machine if needed. We had one instance in which the election judge forgot to pull the USB flash drive from the machine, so we had to look through a closet full of machines to locate the one associated with the flash drive. (Note: the reports processed from the machine and the flash drive identify the machine with a serial number. But, it would be easier if both were numbered).

10) Ballots - create a list and description of the various types of ballots and how they are created, returned and where/when they are processed. For example,
   a. Absentee
   b. Write-ins
   c. Election day ballots processed and scanned

11) Poll workers –
   a. It is a very long day for them. Ensure that they are properly thanked for their time!
   b. Greg and team noted that they had enough election judges and teams for all precincts. These teams, however, are aging.

11/8/19