

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2012

**APPROVED MINUTES OF THE
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING HELD**

**STATE OF MINNESOTA)
DODGE COUNTY)**

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATION OFFICE
MANTORVILLE, MN**

2012-19 C.O.W.

The Dodge County Commissioners met in Committee of the Whole October 9, 2012, in the Commissioner's Room at the Dodge County Courthouse Annex, Mantorville, MN, at 9:00 a.m. CDT. Chair Don Gray opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. CDT.

Meeting Convened

The Chair acknowledged those present:

Those Present

Members present:	Jane Olive	District #1
	Lyle Tjosaas	District #2
	David Erickson	District #3
	Don Gray	District #4
	David Hanson	District #5
Members absent:	None	
Also present:	Jim Elmquist	County Administrator
	Becky Lubahn	Deputy County Clerk
	Sara Marquardt	Accounting Services Director

Accounting Services Director Sara Marquardt met with the Board to discuss the Voter ID Constitutional Amendment that will be on the General election ballot.

Voter ID
Constitutional
Amendment
Discussion

The Constitutional Amendment for Voter ID is stated on the ballot as follows:

PHOTO IDENTIFICATION REQUIRED FOR VOTING

Shall the Minnesota Constitution be amended to require all voters to present valid photo identification to vote and to require the state to provide free identification to eligible voter, effective July 1, 2013?

Ms. Marquardt posed the following questions:

What does this constitutional amendment really mean?

Do the public and the Board know all of the extras that the legislature has included in this amendment?

The Accounting Services Director reported that if the proposed amendment passes, a voter voting in person must present valid government-issued photographic identification before receiving a ballot. If a voter does not have this identification then they will have to vote on a provisional ballot and their vote will not be counted on election day. The voter will then need to come to the courthouse within a few days to show ID or obtain a new ID for their vote to be counted. If the voter cannot produce an ID in the time allowed then the provisional ballot will not be opened and counted.

Also pointed out was that if the proposed constitutional amendment passes there will be added expenses to Dodge County for the additional items needed to run elections. The county will have to purchase computers for the polling places and train/educate additional election judges on the new provisional voting system. The county will also have the added cost of supplies needed to do provisional ballots and the additional staff time to work with provisional ballots.

Voter ID
Constitutional
Amendment
Discussion -
Continued

The Accounting Services Director estimated the cost for Dodge County if the constitutional amendment passes to be between \$71,000 and \$122,000 depending on the type of additional equipment the county will need to buy. It was noted that this is a low estimate.

Ms. Marquardt informed the Board that the cost of standard poll books, include the computers, signature pad, ID readers, cables, other peripherals and tax is \$1,625 each. Dodge County has 21 precincts so this cost will be \$34,125.00.

The cost of electronic poll books that have the power to have a real-time connection to SVRS (Statewide Voter Registration System – This is what is used for tracking registered voters) and meet the other requirements of HF 210, including the computers, ID card reader, cables and other peripherals and tax, is \$4,028 each. Dodge County has the 21 precincts so this cost will be at least \$84,588. In some of the precincts they may need to have additional poll books. The county will also have to have printers in each polling place for an additional cost of \$339 each including tax. The county may only have to have one printer per polling place for a cost of \$6,102.00. So the machines alone will cost Dodge County \$40,000 and \$91,000.

This is the cost for only one of the poll books for each precinct, Ms. Marquardt was sure that some of the county's precincts will need at least two poll books. The county will also have to have at least one backup machine like we do for the AutoMARK and M100 precinct counter.

The Accounting Services Director reported that the county will have to buy provisional ballots, provisional ballot envelopes, and train election judges and staff who are administrating the provisional ballots. Post-Election the election staff will have to put in additional time to help voters who return with ID's and process the provisional ballots. Each polling place will need an additional secured ballot box for the provisional ballot that will cost approximately \$100. Therefore, the county will need \$2,100 for the 21 precincts that we have.

Ms. Marquardt stated that there are so many unanswered questions with the proposed constitutional amendment. Questions the Accounting Services Director had were:

How will this effect Absentee voting?

How will this affect the Overseas and military voting?

Will there still be same-day voter registration?

Voter ID
Constitutional
Amendment
Discussion -
Continued

The amendment says that “All voters, including those not voting in person, must be subject to substantially equivalent identity and eligibility verification prior to a ballot being cast or counted.” The Absentee, Overseas and Military voters will have to present an ID somehow to election officials.

Ms. Marquardt wasn’t sure how someone in California or the Philippines could provide the county with an ID? The voter could send a copy of their ID, but how would the county know the person voting is the person on the ID? The Accounting Services Director noted that this it also be hard for seniors, college students or persons with disabilities to produce an ID.

The amendment states that the state will provide identification at no charge to an eligible voter who does not have ID. Ms. Marquardt posed the following questions:

Where are these ID’s going to be available?

At the county level who will pay for the technology to make these ID’s?

The Accounting Services Director pointed out that in order to get the free ID, the voter will need to have specific documents and if they don’t have those documents that they will have to pay to get copies of the needed documents. The documents needed include a birth certificate or marriage license.

Ms. Marquardt shared the following estimated cost of the proposed Voter ID Amendment:

	Machine Costs	Printer for Machines	Provisional Ballot Envelopes	Provisional Ballot Box	Provisional Ballots	Staff Overtime (Training)	Staff Overtime (Provisional Ballots Verifying)	Maintenance of Machine	Total Estimated Costs
Standard Poll Books	\$34,125	\$6,102	\$1,800	\$2,100	\$11,000	\$2,500	\$6,500	\$7,000	\$71,127
Electronic Poll Books	\$84,588	\$6,102	\$1,800	\$2,100	\$11,000	\$2,500	\$6,500	\$7,000	\$121,590

The additional cost of adding phones lines to the precincts that currently do not have phone lines was discussed.

The Accounting Services Director clarified that the cost of providing citizens with free ID’s was not included in the chart above.

Storage for the new equipment was discussed. Ms. Marquardt stated that if the proposed constitutional amendment passes that she preferred to have the county store the new equipment, along with the other election equipment, rather than have the precincts store the equipment.

Discussion took place on the anticipated delays that will take place on election night if voters are required to show ID. There will be a number of state databases that will have to be accessed in order to verify the voter’s ID.

Concern was expressed regarding numerous precincts throughout the State of Minnesota that will all be trying to access the same databases at the same time on election night. It was doubtful that the system will handle this much traffic in a timely manner.

Commissioners agreed that longer lines at the polls will likely discourage voters and some may leave rather than wait 15-30 minutes to cast their vote.

Voter ID
Constitutional
Amendment
Discussion -
Continued

It was noted that little advertising has been done to inform voters of what the impact of the proposed Constitutional Amendment will be.

It was reported that information on the proposed amendment will be placed in all county papers at least two weeks before the election.

The Accounting Services Director stated that the county can give voters the facts, if asked, on the proposed amendment but are not allowed to persuade the voters one way or another.

Commissioners again expressed concern with the additional costs associated with the proposed amendment and the anticipated delays at the polls on election night.

The Board thanked Ms. Marquardt for the update on the proposed Constitutional Amendment.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:27 a.m. CDT.

Meeting Adjourned

ATTEST:

DON GRAY
CHAIR, COUNTY BOARD

BECKY LUBAHN
DEPUTY CLERK

DATED: