

DATE: April 15, 2016
TO: Commissioner's Court
FROM: Bruce Sherbet
RE: Recommended Election Department Enhancements

On March 1, 2016, Collin County experienced record high voter turnout in the presidential primary elections. Numerous voting locations experienced long lines and other logistical challenges as a result of the historically high voter turnout. It is anticipated that the November 8, 2016 General Election voter turnout will exceed all previous presidential elections and in aggregate will be more than double the turnout that was experienced in the primary elections. In preparation for the upcoming presidential election, the following enhancements have been identified as needing immediate attention:

Voting Equipment

In 2003, Collin County purchased 1000 Diebold Accuvote touch screen voting machines. A few years later, the county bought an additional 410 TSX voting machines to accommodate equipment needs for the November 2008 General Election. The number of voting machines that were purchased coincided with the number of registered voters in the county at the time of purchase. Collin County voter registration rolls have increased by over 100,000 since the 2008 General Election. The recommended ratio for voting machines is one machine for every 250 – 300 registered voters.

Of the 1410 voting machines in inventory, approximately 200 voting machines have been pulled and shelved as inoperable. The elections department is working with the election vendor to determine if any of the inoperable machines can be repaired and placed back in circulation.

Using the recommended voting machine allocation ratio and considering voter registration increases in the county, it is recommended that an additional 400 voting machines be leased for use in the November 2016 Presidential Election.

Recommendation

Lease 400 additional TSX voting units from our election vendor for use in the November 8, 2016 Presidential Election. Estimated cost is \$140,000.00.

(400 @ \$350.00 ea. = \$140,000.00)

Note – The current voting system is hovering at end-of-life and the elections department is recommending in their FY17 Budget that the county initiate an RFP to replace it.

Voter Qualification E-Pollbook Laptops and Peripherals

In 2008, the county upgraded from paper pollbooks to E-Pollbooks laptops and peripherals to qualify voters at voting locations. In 2009, the county adopted the Vote Center method of voting which permits voters to choose their preferred location to vote on Election Day. Voter registration rolls have increased significantly since 2008 and the higher voter turnout at voting locations has caused bottlenecks at the voter qualifying stations. In an effort to avoid long lines at early voting locations and vote centers, additional voter qualification stations are needed at high turnout voting locations.

Recommendation

Recommend purchasing 50 E-Pollbooks, licenses and peripherals for placement at high voter turnout voting sites. Estimated cost is \$175,750.00.

(50 laptops @ \$1,500.00 ea., 50 licenses and peripherals @ \$2,015.00 ea.)

Voter Registration Temp Pool and Overflow Phone Bank

In the 2012 presidential election, the elections department used the vacated UDCF county building to house a 20-person temp pool to process pre-election voter registration applications and updates and to assist polling places and the public with voter registration/voting related calls. The building that was used had available phones, furniture and equipment to accommodate the temp pool/phone bank. The off-site county location and equipment is no longer available for use. It is anticipated that a 25-person temp pool/overflow phone bank will be needed for the 2016 presidential election.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the area that was previously used as the Ballot Counting Station (located adjacent to the Voter Registration Division) be converted to accommodate 12 temp staff employees to process voter registration applications/changes and serve as an overflow phone bank to assist voting locations and the public during election periods.

In addition, it is recommended that the multi-purpose election worker training room be equipped to accommodate 10 temp employees for phone bank assistance during the last two days of early voting and Election Day.

Request installation of data/phone lines for 12 operator stations in the room that was previously used as the Ballot Counting Station. No additional data/phone lines are required for the multi-purpose training room.

25 Desktop Computers, licenses @ \$1,424.00 ea. = \$35,600.00

25 Desk Phones @ \$600.00 ea. = \$15,000.00

25 Headsets @ \$210.00 ea. = \$5,250.00

25 Document Scanners @ \$800.00 ea. = \$20,000.00

25 Desk Chairs @ \$335.00 = \$8,375.00

Install 12 Data/Phone Lines @ \$100.00 ea. = \$1,200.00

Ballot Printers

Because of strict printing specifications, the ballot printer that is used in the elections department is a specific model that is recommended by the election vendor. The elections department has one printer that is used for printing mail ballots, limited ballots, duplication ballots and for voters requesting paper ballots.

As a result of recent legislation, qualified voters can request on their mail ballot application that a ballot will be mailed to them for each election that year instead of submitting individual requests for each election. The legislative change and heightened mail ballot participation has increased mail balloting by over 300% this year. In addition, printing optical scan ballots for limited voters is expected to

increase significantly in the upcoming presidential election. Current inventory of one ballot printer is insufficient to handle ballot printing requirements.

Recommendation

It is recommended that two additional optical scan ballot printers be purchased to satisfy increased ballot printing needs during critical election periods.

Estimated cost is \$15,000.00. (2 ballot printers @ \$7,500.00 ea. = \$15,000.00)

Optical Scan Ballot Counters

In response to significant increases in mail balloting and limited balloting, additional optical scan ballot counters are requested for the upcoming presidential election.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the county lease 5 additional ballot counters for the upcoming presidential election. Estimated cost to lease 5 ballot counters is \$2,250.00.

(5 ballot counters @ \$450.00 ea. = \$2,250.00)

Desktop Computer in Counting Station

The county election vendor (Dominion) has recommended that an additional desktop computer be placed in the counting station for use in the event of hardware failure.

Estimated cost for the back-up desktop computer is \$1,424.00.

(Desktop computer \$1,059.00, Microsoft EA \$114.00, Adobe \$251.00)

Early Voting Workstations

In 2009, the county purchased 20 early voting workstations for use at early voting locations. In 2012, an additional 10 early voting workstations were purchased to

satisfy the expansion of voter qualification stations at voting locations. The number of voting locations and voter qualification stations has increased since these purchases. Additional early voting workstations are needed to accommodate the additional voter qualification units that are being deployed.

Recommendation

It is recommended that 15 early voting workstations be purchased for deployment in the 2016 presidential election. Estimated cost is \$37,125.00.

(15 early voting workstations @ \$2,475.00 ea. = \$37,125.00)

Financial

Following are the funding sources for the requested enhancements:

Lease 400 TSX voting units	\$140,000.00	(033, Contract Elections)
Purchase 50 E-Pollbook laptops	\$175,750.00	(033, Contract Elections)
Purchase 2 ballot printers	\$15,000.00	(033, Contract Elections)
Lease 5 optical scan ballot counters	\$2,250.00	(033, Contract Elections)
Purchase desktop PC for counting station	\$1,424.00	(033, Contract Elections)
Purchase 15 early voting workstations	\$37,125.00	(033, Contract Elections)

Overflow phone bank/processing stations

25 desk phones	\$15,000.00	(033, Contract Elections)
25 headsets	\$5,250.00	(033, Contract Elections)
25 document scanners	\$20,000.00	(033, Contract Elections)
25 desk chairs	\$8,375.00	(033, Contract Elections)
Install 12 data/phone lines	\$1,200.00	(033, Contract Elections)
25 desktop computers	\$35,600.00	(Chapter 19 Grant Fund)