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CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM

Date: January 20, 2021

To: Mark F. Miller, City Manager

From: Robert J. Bruner, Assistant City Manager
M. Aileen Dickson, City Clerk

Subject: Risk Limiting Audit Report – November 3, 2020 General Election

There are three post-election processes that verify the results of the election: the canvass conducted by the County Board of Canvassers, the procedural audit of randomly selected precincts conducted by the County Clerk, and the Risk Limiting Audit (RLA) conducted by the State of Michigan. The canvass is conducted immediately following each election, and must be completed within 2 weeks after the election. The procedural audit is conducted after the canvass has been certified by the Board of Canvassers. This involves a complete review of all election materials (including ballots, applications, election inspector records, posting notices, etc.) from randomly selected precincts in every county. The City of Troy had one precinct (Precinct 5) chosen for an audit after the November 3, 2020 election.

The newest type of post-election review is the Risk Limiting Audit (RLA). Election clerks in Michigan have been piloting RLAs for the past 2 years, including a statewide pilot after the March 2020 Presidential Primary. After the November 3, 2020 General Election, a statewide RLA was held in every county. First, the Bureau of Elections rolled dice to create a 20-digit number, then that number is plugged into software that produced a list of 18,000 randomly selected ballots (called a “ballot manifest”) out of the almost 5.6 million ballots cast on November 3rd. The City of Troy had 170 ballots chosen for auditing in the ballot manifest.

The ballot manifest lists ballots by location within the containers. For example, Troy would be told to pull the 545th ballot from the stack of ballots inside the container for Absentee Precinct 4. Employees of the City Clerk’s Office, along with two Election Aides, conducted Troy’s RLA on Thursday, January 14, 2020 in the Council Boardroom from 9:00am-5:00pm, and it was livestreamed on the City’s YouTube channel for the entirety of the event. Once all 170 ballots were retrieved from the containers, the votes from the Electors of President and Vice-President of the United States contest were recorded on a portal setup by the Bureau of Elections. The Bureau of Elections will take all the votes recorded by all the participating clerks’ offices, and synthesize them in the software to compare to the reported results for that contest. The point of conducting RLAs is to show that the results of the election are accurate as reported. The results of the RLA for the November 3, 2020 General Election will be available in the coming month or so.