



500 West Big Beaver
Troy, MI 48084
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CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM

Date: October 5, 2021

To: Mark F. Miller, City Manager

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

Subject: Election Security Report

The security of all things election-related is a critical function that the City Clerk's Office is constantly evaluating, and making adjustments to procedures when needed. We are providing City Council with this report in advance of the November 2nd election, and to address questions about election security.

Election security encompasses multiple subdivisions: equipment and document storage, cybersecurity, election day security (including chain of custody), and the personal security of people who perform election work.

All election equipment is stored in City Hall. Election equipment includes precinct tabulators (Verity Scan), voter assist terminals (Verity Touch Writer), Electronic Poll Books (EPB), highspeed absentee ballot scanners (Verity Central), and the election results local report workstation (Verity Count). All areas that house equipment are restricted by key or security badge access. Only staff members authorized by the City Clerk have access to those areas, which includes City Clerk's Office staff and Election Aides employed by the City Clerk's Office during election seasons. Every election, a team of 8 employees from the Department of Public Works become sworn Election Assistants for the week around election day. This team is responsible for the delivery, set-up, and pick-up of all the election equipment to the precincts and absent voter counting board.

Ballot drop boxes are located on City property in 4 locations: 2 outside City Hall, 1 outside the Troy Public Library, and 1 outside the Troy Community Center. Only City Clerk's Office staff has keys to the drop boxes located at the Library and Community Center; and, only the City Clerk's Office staff and the Treasurer's Office staff have keys to the drop boxes located at City Hall. During election seasons, the City Clerk's Office staff empties all drop boxes at least once per day. The drop boxes at the Troy Public Library and Troy Community Center are bolted to the pavement, and are sealed closed until election season.

Election-related documents include ballots, absent voter envelopes, absent voter applications, precinct applications to vote, registered voters' master cards, along with various forms used during election seasons. There are three phases of document storage for election documents: pre-election, post-election, and retention.

In the months leading up to each election, all ballots are stored in City Hall in areas that are restricted by key or security badge access. Only City Clerk's Office staff and Election Aides have access to those



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areas. The absent voter envelopes and absent voter applications received from voters are also stored in the same restricted areas. Any blank forms, including applications to vote, are stored there as well.

On election night, the Chairperson from each precinct returns to City Hall, with one of their Election Inspectors from the opposite political party, and brings with them the sealed ballot bag and all election documents from that precinct sealed in a separate bag called a Transfer Container. Ballot bags and Transfer Containers are very specific styles of State-approved bags/containers that can only be used after they've been inspected and certified by the County Board of Canvassers. The Transfer Container includes results tapes from the tabulator, memory drives from the tabulator and voter assist terminal, completed applications to vote, and the paper Poll Book completed and signed by all the Election Inspectors from that precinct. The seal numbers from the ballot bag and the Transfer Container are recorded on a certificate sealed within each respective container, and in the paper Poll Book. The recording of the seal numbers and the sealing of the containers are signed and witnessed by Election Inspectors from both the Republican and Democratic parties who worked in that precinct.

Once the ballot bags are delivered to City Hall, they are stored in a restricted area until 30 days after the completion of the canvass, as required by Election Law. During that security period, the only time a ballot bag may be opened is by a member of the Oakland County Board of Canvassers during the canvass or an official recount. It is unlawful for the City Clerk or any other person to cut the seal on a ballot bag within the 30-day security post-election period.

The Transfer Container is opened by a member of the Receiving Board on election night. The Receiving Board are Election Inspectors appointed by the City Clerk, and approved by the Election Commission. The City Clerk by law is not allowed to participate or interfere with the work of the Receiving Board. The Receiving Board takes custody of the results tapes and the paper Poll Book directly from the precinct Chairperson of each precinct and absent voter counting board. Once the Receiving Board has verified the contents of the paper Poll Book, including seal numbers and signatures, they then seal the documents with copies of results reports printed from the memory drives into envelopes, and seal the envelopes with signed paper seals. The sealed envelopes and all memory drives are delivered to the Oakland County Elections Division for review by the Oakland County Board of Canvassers. All other contents of the Transfer Container are stored in a restricted area of the City Clerk's Office during the 30-day security period.

Once the 30-day security period expires, the City Clerk's Office is allowed to cut the seals on the ballot bags, and move the voted ballots to canvas bags for the retention period. All ballots are stored in a restricted area of City Hall during the retention period (which varies from 30-day security period to 22 months depending on the type of election). Applications to vote from precincts and absent voter applications are boxed and stored at the secure document storage facility for 6 years. Absent voter envelopes returned by voters are boxed and stored at the secure document storage facility for 2 years.

Each voter that is registered to vote in Troy has a hardcopy Master Card, with the voter's signature, that is kept on file within the City Clerk's Office for as long as the voter is registered to vote in Troy. When the voter is no longer registered in Troy (for example, a voter moves or is deceased), the card is pulled from the Active files and placed in the Cancelled files. Active cards and cards for voters cancelled



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within the calendar year are stored in the City Clerk's Office. Cancelled cards older than the current year are stored off-site at our secure storage facility for a retention of 6 years.

The safety of our election workers, in the precinct, the absent voter counting board, and in City Hall, is one of our major priorities. City Management takes any threats made toward City Clerk's Office staff and election workers very seriously. The Troy Police Department provides directed patrols to all locations involved in the election on election days. Troy Police Community Services also participates in our Election Inspector and Chairperson training to provide tips on staying safe in precincts. The Election Assistants also traverse the city on election day, with one of their priorities being to make sure the polling locations are secure.

Probably the most asked about security issue in elections is cybersecurity. First, to address the most commonly asked questions:

- Verity Scan, Verity Touch Writer, Verity Central, and Verity Count are never connected to the internet
- Electronic Poll Book is never connected to the internet on election day – the laptop is updated about 3-4 days before election day then the network connection is disabled; election data is not loaded to the laptop until after 4pm the day before the election
- Only City Clerk's Office staff members who have completed the State-required training classes have access to the Qualified Voter File (QVF) and utilize two-factor authentication; the City Clerk is required to review and re-certify the list of staff members with access every 30 days and whenever staff changes occur
- Every Verity Scan, Verity Touch Writer, and Verity Central is tested for logic and accuracy prior to each election before the majority of absent voter ballots are mailed

The City Clerk is the Election Official for the City and is required by Election Law to be an accredited election official with the State of Michigan. In the Troy City Clerk's Office, 4 of the 5 full-time employees (including the City Clerk and Deputy City Clerk) are accredited election officials with the State of Michigan. The remaining full-time employee and the part-time employee have been unable to attend accreditation class since they started employment in 2020, during which time the Bureau of Elections was not offering accreditation classes due to the pandemic. These two employees are expected to earn their accreditation sometime in 2021 or 2022 as in-person classes resume. Accreditation class is a thorough and intensive education on all aspects of election administration, with a final exam. Cybersecurity is addressed during many modules of the class.

The City of Troy is very fortunate to have an Information Technology Department that provides excellent cybersecurity education for employees. Many of the cybersecurity threats to election offices and election officials throughout the world have come from phishing emails, or other preventable sources. The City Clerk's Office works closely with our IT Department to make sure our systems are secure, and that we remain vigilant of the potential for threats.

The City Clerk will continue to monitor security updates and legislation in order to make sure that Troy's elections continue to be extremely secure for all our voters.