

Board of Supervisors

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AGENDA FOR WORK SESSION
Tuesday, February 26, 2013 at 2:30 p.m.
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE ROOM
1415 MELODY LANE, BUILDING G, BISBEE, AZ 85603

ANY ITEM ON THIS AGENDA IS OPEN FOR DISCUSSION

ROLL CALL

Members of the Cochise County Board of Supervisors will attend either in person or by telephone, video or internet conferencing.

INTRODUCTIONS

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Board of Supervisors

1. Discussion and possible direction from the Board regarding the recommendations of the Elections Task Force.

Pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Cochise County does not, by reason of a disability, exclude from participation in or deny benefits or services, programs or activities or discriminate against any qualified person with a disability. Inquiries regarding compliance with ADA provisions, accessibility or accommodations can be directed to Chris Mullinax, Safety/Loss Control Analyst at (520) 432-9720, FAX (520) 432-9716, TDD (520) 432-8360, 1415 Melody Lane, Building F, Bisbee, Arizona 85603.

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"PUBLIC PROGRAMS, PERSONAL SERVICE"

DIS-1153

Work Session Board of Supervisors2

Meeting Date: 02/26/2013

Elections Task Force

Submitted By: Arlethe Rios, Board of Supervisors

Department: Board of Supervisors

Presentation: PowerPoint

Document Signatures:

NAME of PRESENTER: Juanita Simmons

**Items For Discussion 1.
Board of Supervisors**

Recommendation:

of ORIGINALS

Submitted for Signature:

TITLE of PRESENTER: Elections & Special Districts Director

Mandated Function?:

Source of Mandate or Basis for Support?:

Information

Agenda Item Text:

Discussion and possible direction from the Board regarding the recommendations of the Elections Task Force.

Background:

After the last general election several entities in Cochise County wanted to discuss suggestions on how to make the election process more seamless with the Board. Ms. Simmons organized a group of interested individuals to discuss their recommendations and after several meetings is prepared to discuss with the Board.

Department's Next Steps (if approved):

n/a

Impact of NOT Approving/Alternatives:

n/a

To BOS Staff: Document Disposition/Follow-Up:

n/a

Attachments

Presentation



Elections Task Force

As requested by the Board of Supervisors, staff has conducted an evaluation of the election process with specific focus on identifying opportunities for improvement.

Four activities were conducted to obtain feedback and recommendations from all stakeholders. These included:

- Precinct Survey
- Two Sierra Vista Wrap Up sessions with poll workers
- Mail survey to all poll workers outside Sierra Vista area
- Task Force meeting held on December 19, 2012



PRECINCT SURVEY

The precinct survey is done on election night after every election.

Wait times

11/6/2012 – 24% of precincts had less than 5 minutes wait

11/11/2008 – 2.5% of precincts had less than 5 minute wait

11/6/2012 – 1 precinct report wait time greater than 1 hour

11/11/2008 – 5 precincts reported wait time greater than 1 hour



Sierra Vista Wrap – Up Sessions

On December 10, 2012 two sessions were held with the poll workers who worked the Sierra Vista precincts.

Forty-five poll workers attended representing 16 precincts.

The following topics were discussed:

- Signature rosters – format and binding
- Provisional ballots – large volume due to voters who were marked as having received an early ballot.
- Training for poll workers – train the trainer, small groups for new workers and cross training were recommended
- Poll workers – 3 precincts felt they could have benefit from additional help, all expressed concerns of the long day without breaks



Sierra Vista Wrap – Up Sessions *continued*

The following topics were discussed:

- Maps – the precinct and regional maps were too small and without enough detail to be helpful.
- Dropped off early ballots – large number of ballots, suggested runner to pick up early ballots mid-day.
- Military – Additional pre-election contact needs to be made with base commander regarding election procedures for military personnel.
- Polling locations – the redistricting from 64 precincts to 49 precincts did create confusion especially for those voters who had not voted in the primary.
- Signage – Signage print is too small and there is difficulty in posting signage.



Poll worker surveys

All of the poll workers who did not participate in the Sierra Vista wrap-up sessions were sent a one page survey with 4 questions.

1. What went right?
2. What can we do better?
3. What can we do to improve training?
4. How can we better educate the voters?

Of approximately 200 surveys mailed 41 were returned (20% return rate).

Overall, the respondents felt that things went well noting that the other poll workers were good to work with and training sessions were good.

Feedback included issues involving:

- Provisional ballots – volume
- Signatures rosters - format and binding
- Signage - additional street signs
- Precinct maps – larger with more detail
- Pay for poll workers needed to be raised
- Ballot length was too long
- Training manual needed to be updated
- Supplies – additional amounts were needed.



Task Force

On December 19, 2012, Mike Ortega convened the election task force. There were 27 participants representing both political parties, poll watchers, poll workers, the media and staff.

The members raised the following issues:

- Enhanced voter education needs to be done with emphasizes on early voting processes.
- Efforts to streamline the processes between the Recorder's Office and Elections Office for provisional ballots needs to be evaluated.
- Consideration needs to be given to all vote by mail.
Consideration needs to be given to all voting at the poll.
- The process of updating voter registration through MVD needs to be evaluated.
- Some confusion over precincts after redistricting and reduction to 49 poll places requires more voter education



Task Force continued.

- Strong support was given for new technology to include electronic poll books and vote centers.
- Streamline process at the poll by having a separate line for those needing to do a provisional ballot.
- Signature rosters need to be formatted differently and placed into two binders (A-L and M-Z splits)
- Poll workers should have shifts to reduce fatigue.
- It was suggested that alternative drop off sites be designated for early ballots.
- Overseas military voting processes need to be reviewed and improved as they significantly slowed down the tabulation process.
- There was discussion on accessibility at some of the polling locations.
- It was suggested that no write-in line be provided unless there are official write-in candidates.



Summary

The comments received by all of the groups and surveys were consistent and included specific suggestions for improvement.

The recommendations being provided are broken into two categories:

1. Legislative issues (State Statute)
2. County Operational Improvements



Recommendations

Legislative Issues

1. Poll Workers – allow poll workers to be scheduled to work in shifts to reduce the fatigue of a 15-17 hour work day.
2. Voter Education – fund and conduct state wide voter education that focuses on early ballots, provisional ballots, sample ballots and identification at the polls.
3. Evaluate and improve the processing of voter registration updates provided through the Department of Motor Vehicle.
4. Provide financial assistance / support for funding of new technology (electronic poll books / vote centers).
5. Allow for no write-in line if there are no official write-in candidates.



Recommendations

County Operational Improvements

1. Implementation of:
 - a) Electronic poll books
 - b) Vote centers
 - c) Redesigned precinct maps
 - d) Multiple drop off locations for early ballots
 - e) Multiple storage locations for election supplies

2. Coordinate voter education plan (in collaboration with Statewide efforts) to include:
 - a) Continuation of voter outreach
 - b) Designate media contact for election processes



Recommendations

continued

3. As soon as allowed by Statute, begin early ballot tabulation
4. Modify procedures for proofing of ballots
5. Increase poll worker training and expand training materials
6. Evaluate logistics of polling locations
7. Develop better signage for polling locations

Note: Operational improvements #1, 2, 5 and 7 will have cost implications. Item #6 may result in increase cost if it is determined that polling locations need to be changed.