

Background notes for Madison Election Advisory Committee for January 9 2007 meeting, Assembled and bolding added by Paul Malischke

Discussion item 4. Pollworker recruitment and training.

Excerpts from Wisconsin 2005 Act 451, effective July 1, 2006

Election Official Training

Under current law, the elections board conducts training programs for chief inspectors (chief officials at polling places). No person may serve as a chief inspector if he or she has not been certified by the elections board as having met the requirements prescribed by the board for certification. The elections board must also prescribe requirements for maintaining certification. The elections board may also conduct training programs for other election officials. Municipal clerks and boards of election commissioners are required to train all election officials, and municipalities may require applicants for election official positions to take examinations.

Currently, the elections board and municipal clerks and boards of election commissioners may appoint special registration deputies who obtain voter registrations from electors prior to the close of registration and municipal clerks may appoint special voting deputies to conduct voting at nursing homes and certain retirement homes and community-based residential facilities. Currently, the clerks and boards of election commissioners must train the deputies in accordance with rules prescribed by the elections board.

Beginning for elections held in 2008, the bill requires all municipal clerks to receive election training at least once every 2 years. **The bill authorizes the elections board to produce and periodically update a video program and make the program available electronically through an Internet-based system for training purposes. Also, the bill requires municipal clerks to train all poll workers other than chief inspectors, who continue to be trained and certified under current law, as well as special registration deputies and special voting deputies pursuant to rules developed by the elections board. The bill provides that no person may serve as a poll worker, special registration deputy, or special voting deputy unless that person has received training required in the bill unless certain unforeseen circumstances occur. Under the bill, municipalities are required to compensate election officials other than special registration deputies and special voting deputies for attendance at training sessions as currently provided.**

High School Student Poll Workers

Generally, a pupil who is 16 or 17 years of age, who is enrolled in grades 9 to 12 in a public or private school, and who has at least a 3.0 grade point average (GPA) may serve as an inspector (poll worker) at the polling place serving the pupil's residence. Approval of the pupil's parent or guardian and of the school principal is required. There must be at least one qualified elector of the state serving at the polling place for a pupil to be appointed and a pupil may not serve as chief

inspector. The term of appointment of an inspector lasts for 2 years and until his or her successor is appointed and qualified. The bill eliminates the minimum GPA requirement and instead authorizes school boards to develop criteria for approving students to serve as poll workers. The bill also modifies the term of service of a high school pupil appointed to serve as an inspector. Under the bill, a high school pupil is appointed for one election only rather than for 2 years. The bill does not prohibit such a pupil from being appointed to serve at future elections.

Additional Poll Worker: Greeter

Under current law, there must be at least 3 inspectors (poll workers) at each polling place. Municipalities may increase that number and may appoint special registration deputies on a nonpartisan basis to register voters at polling places on election day. Inspectors must be appointed from lists containing the names of eligible electors submitted by party committeemen and committeewomen. If no names or insufficient names are submitted, inspectors are appointed on a nonpartisan basis. Certain high school pupils may also be appointed to serve as inspectors. The party whose candidate for president or governor received the most votes in the area served by the polling place at the most recent general election is entitled to one more appointment than the other party. Alternate officials must also be appointed in a sufficient number to maintain adequate staffing.

The bill provides that each municipality may appoint an additional inspector on a nonpartisan basis who serves as a greeter and substitutes for other inspectors who must leave the voting room temporarily. Under the bill, the additional inspector is not entitled to participate in the canvassing process.

From state statutes as revised by Act 451:

7.30 (2) (c) The governing body of any municipality may require all persons serving as election officials to prove their ability to read and write English and to have a general knowledge of the election laws. Examinations may be given to prove the qualifications can be met. The municipal clerk shall ensure that all training meets the training requirements prescribed in rules promulgated by the board under ss. 7.31 and 7.315.

From a document on the SEB website further explaining Act 451:

Election Official Training & Terms of Appointment

- Election inspectors, special voting deputies and special registration deputies shall attend or view a training program at least once every two years and may not serve unless they attend or view a training session within two years of the date of an election. This applies for the 2008 election, so election inspectors, special voting deputies and special registration deputies must attend approved training before January 1, 2008, section 7.315(1)(b).
 - *Municipal clerks are required to provide training to election inspectors, special voting deputies and special registration deputies once every two years. The requirements of this training are currently being established through an administrative rule by the SEB, sections 7.15(1)(e), (11), 7.30(2)(c).*

Discussion Item #5 Elimination of Common Council meetings on nights of general elections.

Madison General ordinances 2.01 MEETINGS.

(1) The stated meeting of the Common Council shall be held in the Council Chambers on the first and third Tuesdays of every month at 6:30 p.m., except in August and December the Common Council will meet only on the first Tuesday; provided, however, that a meeting shall be scheduled for November 14, 2006 for the purpose of adopting the 2007 Capital and Operating Budgets that additional meetings to consider the 2007 Capital and Operating Budgets shall be scheduled for November 15 and 16, 2006, if necessary, each starting at 7:00 p.m.; that the regularly scheduled meeting of February 20, 2007 shall be rescheduled to February 27, 2007; that the regularly scheduled meeting of April 3, 2007 shall be rescheduled to March 27, 2007; and that a meeting shall be scheduled for April 17, 2007 at 12:00 noon for the purpose of swearing-in newly-elected Council members.

(Am. by Ord. 12,334, 2-26-99; Ords. 12,502 & 12,503, 11-19-99; Ord. 12,572, 5-3-00; Ord. 12,985, 12-24-01; Ord. 13,172, 11-5-02; Ord. 13,440, 11-7-03; Ord. 13,701, 9-29-04; Ord. 13,721, 11-9-04; ORD-05-00114, 6-7-05; ORD-05-00145, 9-23-05; ORD-05-00170, 11-8-05; ORD-06-0003, 1-19-06; ORD-06-00105, 8-22-06)

(2) (R. by Ord. 6539, 3-8-79)

(3) The Common Council of the City of Madison shall meet no later than the first Council meeting in December to act upon the adoption of the City Budget. (Am. by Ord. 8156, 11-14-83)

(4) The Common Council shall not meet on the following holidays: New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and **any general or primary election day at which local city offices or positions are decided.** (Am. by Ord. 13,308, 4-30-03)

Discussion Item #6: Positions of unpaid volunteer poll workers

From state statutes:

7.03 Compensation of election officials and trainees.

(1) (a) Except as authorized under this paragraph, a reasonable daily compensation shall be paid to each inspector, voting machine custodian, automatic tabulating equipment technician, member of a board of canvassers, messenger, and tabulator who is employed and performing duties under chs. 5 to 12. Daily compensation shall also be provided to inspectors and inspector trainees for attendance at training programs conducted by the board and municipal clerks under ss. 7.31 and 7.315. Alternatively, such election officials and trainees may be paid by the hour at a proportionate rate for each hour actually worked. Any election official or trainee may choose to volunteer his or her services by filing with the municipal clerk of the municipality in which he or she serves a written declination to accept compensation. The volunteer status of the election official or trainee remains effective until the official or trainee files a written revocation with the municipal clerk.

Two more references:

QUICK START MANAGEMENT GUIDE FOR POLL WORKERS

Available at http://www.eac.gov/eac_qs_guides.htm

From federal Election Assistance Commission's Best Practices Toolkit, page 20
<http://www.eac.gov/bp/>

1.1 Incentive programs.

Ideas that focus on recognizing pollworker service include: election-specific lapel pins, pollworker newsletters and even chocolate kisses.

1.2 Creative Ideas for pollworker retention.

Pollworker retention is also a challenge for election officials. To the extent that you can regain pollworkers by easing the labor involved and by creating incentives for them to sign up again, you reduce your recruitment needs. What follows are a few ideas that jurisdictions have tried to retain their pollworker pool.

Example

Los Angeles County, California, communicates with its 22,000 pollworkers via a pollworker newsletter, "[The Poll Cat.](#)" This newsletter serves at least 3 purposes: (1) Educates pollworkers on the county's strategic initiatives such as new voting systems, Neighborhood Voting Centers and the Inspector Supply Pick Up Program, (2) briefs pollworkers on key procedures for that particular election such as changes in the roster of voters, (3) highlights interesting pollworkers such as long-time pollworkers, pollworkers who went above and beyond the call of duty, student pollworkers, etc. and (4) repeatedly seeks input from and gives thanks to the pollworkers.

1. Pre-Election Poll Worker Testing and Training

In addition to the challenge of recruiting and retaining a sufficient number of pollworkers, election officials face the difficult task of training this volunteer army of pollworkers to conduct the election. This task will be even more challenging in a year when new federal requirements go into effect for the first time. The following suggestions aim to ensure pollworkers are adequately prepared on Election Day.

2.1 Hands-on training.

Give pollworkers an opportunity for extensive hands-on training close to the election. This training can be offered outside the normal curriculum and training schedule in the form of "pollworker clinics." Observing pollworkers in this context may help you identify who is willing and able to take on more sophisticated assignments.

Example

Johnson County, Kansas has developed a Pollworker training program called “Practice Makes Perfect”. Johnson County invites pollworkers to stop by hands-on training centers for more intensive practice sessions than were possible at training classes. Go to the [Pollworker Invitation](#) and [Practice Makes Perfect Training](#) outline for more information.

2.2 Training Content

- Remember: It’s not about *YOU*; it’s about *THEM*. Training presentations need to be developed and conducted from the pollworkers’ perspective. As you develop the program, put yourself in the pollworkers’ position and provide the information and tools they will need to do the best job possible. In addition to the focus on their responsibilities, provide details about lunch, pay, responsibilities, how they should communicate with you, and *how much you appreciate them*.

Provide training videos to vary the format and, importantly, ensure consistency in training on key information and practices. Reinforce the videos by providing copies of the videos in the election supplies and/or work with your cable access channels to show the videos.

- Training the trainer. Consider partnering with or employing local continuing education professionals.

Coordinate with a local university in developing your training materials. For example, a local university may be able to work with you to establish a certification program or to develop training videos.

Conduct a pollworker debriefing following the election to get the pollworkers’ perspective and evaluate training.