

CLERK OF DISTRICT COURT
MONTANA

2023 JUN -9 AM 8:54

FILED
BY: 
CLERK

MONTANA EIGHTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT, CASCADE COUNTY

<p>GREAT FALLS PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES,</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Petitioner,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">vs.</p> <p>SANDRA MERCHANT, in her official capacity as CASCADE COUNTY CLERK & RECORDER and CASCADE COUNTY,</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Respondent.</p>	<p>Cause No.: DV-23-222 Hon. Brenda R. Gilbert</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MONITORS REPORT</p>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

June 2, 2023, 10:14am

I went into the elections office and the count board was already in the backroom getting prepared to separate the ballots from the secrecy envelopes. This process is the most important and critical part of the election process. The Elect MT voter database and count machine are NOT connected to each other in any way so, this is why you must make sure each precinct is balanced before they are ready to be scanned through the count machine. The role of the count board is to balance each precinct as they separate the ballots from secrecy. The numbers for balancing come from the Elect MT voter database. So, each day as mail comes in election staff scan and verify signatures on the affirmation envelopes and then balance the precincts for ballots accepted into Elect MT.

The volunteer judge in charge of the count board was Julie Bass. I had requested the ballot processing report for each precinct from the last day the election staff had processed mailed. The report date I was given was June 4, 2023 and then given another spreadsheet from Julie with two different sets of numbers, in which I was unsure what numbers I or the count board was supposed to balancing to. Julie kept making the comment that the Elect MT ballot processing report would not be correct as the system was having issues with updating the correct numbers. So, I did talk with Stuart Fuller from the Secretary of State's office just to verify how the system updates the number. Stuart did inform me the system is a live system and it updates immediately

with any changes in the system. So, I do believe the ballot processing report that was given to me was the correct information to balance each precinct. In regards, to the count board balancing I believe that some of the precincts were balanced and there were some that did not balance prior to being scanned into the count machine on election day. At this point, I cannot positively say the election will balance but maybe within the margin of error.

June 6,2023 Election Day

I was not sure what the protocol was on election day on asking questions so, I emailed the question to all parties in the late afternoon. I noticed that five of the eight precincts' tables had only two election judges at the table issuing ballots and one precinct (P27) was issuing ballots by herself. I do believe that you must have three election judges to issue ballots to a voter.

I did notice that the volunteer judge in charge of the count board did have access to the count machine's passwords and was in contact with Election System & Software the site support for the count machine. In my opinion I believe that since this volunteer is not a county employee nor an election official this would be a breach of security.

Since the two weeks of monitoring the process in the elections office communication between Sandra and myself was very minimal to none. I had more questions from the election staff than from Sandra. I was open to answering and helping with their process to running the ballots through the count machine which was highly effective for them to complete their count.

Overall, with having a poll election that saw roughly 300 in-person voters, I would say that election day ran smoothly with some minor office adjustments that could be taken under advisement.

EMAILED

Raph Graybill
Ben Graybill
Lilla Lund
Judge Gilbert