Date: October 9, 2018
From: Chris Jerdonek, OSVTAC Chair
To: OSVTAC

RE: June 2018 Election Observation Questions & Answers

Below are the questions I sent to Director of Elections John Arntz on July 9, 2018 on behalf of TAC following TAC's tour of the election canvass on June 8, along with the responses I received from the Director on October 4.

1. During the tour we learned that every page of each Roster of Voters is scanned after Election Day. Does this mean that each whole page is captured as a single digital picture, or does it just mean that the bar codes were scanned for voters that signed in?

The entire pages are captured and if the bubbles are checked next to voters' names then the system attributes voting history.

2. Are the completed Posted Ballot Statements for each precinct also scanned?

No.

3. Are the completed Custody Transfer Forms scanned?

No.

4. Are the completed Security Seal Sheets scanned?

No.

5. Do you use special software or a database for storing these various scanned images? How do you currently keep track of them and keep them organized, etc?

No special software for storing roster images. PDFs are organized by precinct and each precinct's roster image is saved as a file. The files are stored in one folder.

6. If a San Francisco voter sends a voter registration card to the Secretary of State, is it also sent to San Francisco? Also, does San Francisco process it, or does the Secretary of State's Office process it?

The SOS will forward registration cards from San Francisco residents to this office for processing.

7. Are the four central scanners that San Francisco uses the same scanners that it purchased 10 years ago, or have any of them been replaced since then?

The scanners are the same as were used 10-years ago.

8. When a ballot is “remade,” is there anything done to connect or "link" the remade card with the original card (e.g. marking a unique identifier on either ballot)? Also, is the original card kept physically alongside the remade card, or is it stored separately? If it's not alongside, how is it found and retrieved if it needs to be retrieved?

Here is the section from the Election Plan describing the remake process responsive to these questions:

"Under certain circumstances, when a ballot is unreadable by the 400-C machine, the Department must "remake," or duplicate, the ballot so it can be read by the equipment as authorized by CAEC §15210. For example, ballots that are torn, bent, folded, dirty, damp, or otherwise damaged must be remade. The 400-C machines also separate ballot cards with write-in votes, which require manual review. The ballot remake process begins approximately one week before Election Day and may continue until the election is certified.

Generally, the remake team consists of four members: two screeners and two markers. All members working on the remake team undergo training on how to properly interpret voter marks and intent. Working together, the screeners review each ballot card that is out-stacked by the 400-C machine to determine whether a remake is necessary. If the screeners determine that a remake is necessary, the markers duplicate the votes cast on the original ballot on a remake ballot. The remake must reflect the intent of the voter as determined by the screeners. The process is closely monitored to ensure accuracy and consistency. All original and duplicated ballots are notated with the same serial numbers so that they can be identified and paired later, if necessary. All duplicated ballots are transferred in daily batches to the Computer room for processing on the 400-C machines. The corresponding original ballots are transferred to Room 59 for archiving.

Staff monitor the ballot card counts throughout the remake process to track the number of cards requiring remake, the number of cards that were remade, the number of remade ballots that were processed, the number of cards that remain to be remade, and the number of cards that remain to be processed."

9. How many individual ballot cards were remade this past election? Can you categorize the reasons for remaking a ballot? What are the top few reasons for remaking a ballot, in order? (Just a rough idea is okay.)

Around 11,000. One reason for remakes is people mark a choice, then cross it out, and select another choice, which causes an overvote that needs to be manually reviewed and remade. Another reason is people who don't complete the arrow but select choices consistently using another method such as circling names or write-in candidates' names and complete the arrow.

10. How long has San Francisco been using the OPEX extractors to open vote-by-mail envelopes? How many extractors does San Francisco currently have and use?

The Department has used the OPEX extractors for three years and uses four extractors.

11. Does our current voting system have the ability to export cast vote records (CVR's) in a machine-readable format for all contests, or just RCV contests?

No.

12. What is the scanning rate of the central scanners (e.g. cards per second or cards per minute), assuming a stack of cards has already been readied for insertion?

The scanning rate depends on the size of the batch, the condition of the cards, and the experience of the user and the rate can range to several hundred an hour to several thousand.

13. Over the course of a busier day of scanning VBM ballots, if central scanners are being used, approximately what fraction of the time is a scanner actually scanning ballots versus waiting for ballots to be prepared and fed into it? In other words, how much of the time is a scanner in an "idle" mode?

Too many variable exist to establish an average time the equipment is in idle mode.

14. Is the overall rate of scanning (e.g. per day) limited more by the speed of the central scanners, or more by the various preparatory steps needed before ballots are actually fed into the scanner?

Both the speed and preparation impact scanning rates as does size of the batches, condition of cards, etc.

15. If the preparatory steps are slower, how much slower do you think the scanning rate could be and not significantly affect the overall scanning rate?

More time added to prepping ballots will reduce the scanning rate accordingly.

16. Approximately how many ballots can be prepared in a single "stack" for feeding into the machine at a single time, without having to reload? How long does it take to move such a stack into place and remove the old one?

The size of the batches varies and can range from several cards to several hundred and loading also involves other steps such as noting the precinct on control sheets and in the system.

17. What changes are expected for the new VBM scanners that will be deployed in 2019? For example, how many will there be, how many will be used at a time, how does the size / required amount of floor space compare, and how does the speed compare? Are there are any other significant differences expected in how they will perform and be used?

I do not have information responsive to these questions at this time.

18. Is there any software used for processing ballots aside from EIMS and the voting system? For these other software components, did you have to purchase them or were they written in-house?

The software for processing ballots is WinEDS and there is no other software components.

19. Does the Department use any software for "batch management" of ballots (e.g. what batches have been scanned and when, what ballots are in a batch, etc)? Is it a home-grown system, or is it part of EIMS or the voting system?

No.