

MINUTES

DUE TO EMERGENCY CONDITIONS, THIS MEETING WAS CONDUCTED BY TELEPHONE AND/OR VIDEO CONFERENCE

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on this 18TH DAY of DECEMBER, 2020, Elections Commission of Fort Bend County, Texas met with the following present:

COUNTY JUDGE KP GEORGE	CHAIR
COUNTY CLERK LAURA RICHARD	VICE CHAIR
COUNTY TAX ASSESSOR/COLLECTOR CARRIE SURRATT	SECRETARY
LINDA HOWELL REPUBLICAN PARTY CHAIR	
CYNTHIA GINYARD DEMOCRATIC PARTY CHAIR	

A roll call of the Elections Commission Board was called by Laura Richard, County Clerk with all present.

In addition, the County Clerk confirmed other ancillary attendees were present.

John Oldham, Elections Administrator

Roy Cordes, County Attorney

Office of County Attorney Representative Justin Pfeiffer, Civil Attorney, Litigation,

Office of County Attorney Representative Marcus Spencer, First Assistant County Attorney

Brian Middleton, District Attorney,

Office of District Attorney Representative Terese Buess, Chief Prosecutor

Robyn Doughtie, Information Technology Director

1. Call to Order.

Call to Order by Judge KP George at 1:01 p.m.

2. Review and analyze the Fort Bend County 2020 Election Cycle and Administration and take all appropriate action.

Judge KP George indicated this is an informational item, there is no motion needed.

Mr. John Oldham, Elections Administrator provided a brief overview of 2020 Fort Bend County Election Cycle. Mr. Oldham stated there were six elections conducted in 2020, with a Special Election in January, a couple of small jurisdictions in May, a primary runoff in July, the general election in November and a runoff election in December. The new voting equipment was used in July for the first time. A new poll book was implemented in November, which was largely designed to minimize conversation between poll workers and voters. The voters could make choices and provide information on a touch screen in order to minimize physical contact between ink pens and paper, etc. The runoff in August had the biggest turnout of any County in the state; not just percentage; but total number of voters. In November, the County had the 3rd largest percentage turnout of any County.

Judge KP George reviewed what was learned during this past election cycle, what improvements need to be made moving forward and how Fort Bend County can implement an elections system that is up to the full faith of the County's citizens.

Robyn Doughtie, Information Technology Director, provided an overview of IT's involvement and issues with the 2020 Election. On October 13, IT became involved with providing election support and had 28 individuals from her department update some of the files on the election's computers. On October 16 through the end of early voting and on Election Day, IT provided support for the Election.

Mr. Brian Middleton, District Attorney, spoke on the issues, experience and solutions his office encountered with the election. Nationally, the DA's office was engaged out of concerns and reports of potential interference with the election. A joint task force was formed with the DA and County Attorney's office. The task force also included Elections, the Information Technology Department and the County Judge's Office.

Ms. Terese Buess, Chief of Public Integrity Division spoke regarding the involvement of the bipartisan Fort Bend County Voter Protection Task Force. This group anticipated issues and dealt with them on the front end rather than after they occurred.

There were discussions about the involvement of the Task Force, equipment failures and the new voting machines.

Judge George stated there were 359,881 who voted compared to the past election which had 257,000 who voted. The last election was unprecedented and had 73.6% participation. The Elections Department and everyone who participated did an amazing job. Judge George asked Mr. Oldham if there was anything the County could have done differently to conduct the Election more smoothly.

Mr. Oldham, Elections Administrator explained on the first day there were issues.

- The poll books had incorrect dates.
- There was cross-pollination of kiosks.
- Testing the system with all running at the same time.
- The unprecedented number of ballots by mail caused Elections to be behind.
- The system had to be retested which took a week due to many minor political subdivisions on the ballot.
- There was a delay of two more days due to the suit involving the straight party.
- The size of the ballot had to have a small but readable font and the ballots could not be run through a folding machine. There were 39,000 ballots that had to be folded by hand.
- Many temps were hired.
- Around 600 poll workers had to be trained which was a challenge, with four hours of equipment training and the protocol training on COVID.

Mr. Oldham stated the Elections Department did the steps needed; however this was a new system and the training will be done differently going forward.

Judge KP George indicated there are a few examples in which he calls lack of planning or not having a backup plan.

- Communicating with the Elections office and not getting a timely response.
- There was no plan on how to deal with ongoing check-in machine issues.
- On Election Day, at one or two locations, the polls could not open on time because the Election Judge did not test run the machines the day before Election Day.

Judge felt there was lack of coordination and planning.

Mr. Oldham, Elections Administrator stated he appreciates all that IT did for the Election. In the past, he never had to coordinate with IT other than a phone line. Normally, the poll books are not opened unless the bipartisan representation is in place. Legally, it cannot be turned on until Election Day. The poll books were tested in the Test Mode. Had they been tested differently, the date issue would have been caught. The training started immediately after Labor Day and ran over 60 classes for workers at a minimum of 4 hours each. Mr. Oldham had to deal with some poll workers getting sick as well as deal with the pandemic, which was a huge distraction. By and large the workers did a good job.

Judge George stated there were a few troubled locations, Bowie Middle School and Hightower High School, which lacked coordination.

Mr. Oldham, Elections Administrator explained the situation at the two locations. On that Friday Mr. Oldham found out that Hightower High School wanted to move the polling to another location. The equipment had been moved to a different location which had a few steps. The polling was also moved at Bowie without Mr. Oldham's knowledge and there were social distancing issues. Mr. Oldham stated Elections is a guest at these schools and the amount of space given is beyond his control. Mr. Oldham also explained the delay in the mailing ballots, which was due to being incorrectly stuffed. He also explained the reason why some Missouri City voters did not receive their mail in ballots. And also, Mr. Oldham explained there were four voters on Monday morning that were turned away in Stafford and the poll workers did not report this to the Elections staff.

Linda Howell, Republican Party Chair explained that the Elections Administrator's office was inundated by meetings, attacks and questions continually. Ms. Howell stated there were problems; but there are going to be problems. If Fort Bend County had the highest voter participation in Texas, there was not voter suppression.

Judge George stated the Elections Committee will continue to have meetings to have a better election and a better plan moving forward.

Cynthia Ginyard, Democratic Party Chair explained that the County has reached a point where the County cannot operate as in the past. Changes have to be made, be more encompassing and mesh with the IT Department. Ms. Ginyard stated the County has grown in the learning process from this past election. Elections had new machines for the July runoff and COVID-19 and the election went great. The election in November did not go so well. The machines were not set which created other problems. Ms. Ginyard stated there were enough poll workers and machines, but feels there were not enough intake pads.

There were discussions on the lack of kiosk, connections and problems during this past election cycle. There should be accountability, have solutions and provide a smooth election cycle for the citizens of Fort Bend County.

Cynthia Ginyard, Democratic Party Chair stated there are issues all the time with the Elections process. This is not a perfect process. There is one precinct in Missouri City and one precinct in Harris County that votes in the Missouri City election. Precinct 5 or 6 – Harris County, City of Missouri City did not receive their ballot by mail. There were 387 who did not get their ballots. Ballots by mail went out prior to Early Voting and these voters had 5 days to get their ballots by mail in. Ms. Ginyard stated whether this was intentional, accidental or overlooked, it is all voter suppression.

John Oldham, Elections Administrator addressed the issue of the mail in ballots that were not sent. Harris County had a list of 440 voters where Missouri City had to download the applications for the Elections Department. The law says it's Harris County's responsibility to send the apps to Missouri City and it's Missouri City's responsibility to send the apps to Fort Bend County's Elections Department. The responsibility was on Missouri City to get those apps to the Elections Department.

Justin Pfeiffer, Office of County Attorney, Civil Attorney, Litigation pointed out as a County, Fort Bend County was among with Harris County and Travis County in the forefront of trying to expand vote by mail as much as possible. The County was involved in several of the legal issues and was one of the most active Counties.

Linda Howell, Republican Party Chair stated moving forward she recommends the Commission meet monthly or every couple of months in order to solve these problems before we get to another election and would like to make sure the Elections Office has adequate funding they need to perform their job.

Judge George asked John Oldham, Elections Administrator to provide a full report of the 2020 General Election issues experienced and also the detail listing of steps, including scheduled audits of the system to ensure similar errors do not happen. It is requested to be submitted to the Elections Commission within 30 days, January 18, 2021. (What happened in the past, what was learned, what issues were experienced and what steps are to be taken to address these issues.)

Robyn Doughtie, IT Director offered recommendations.

- IT has a project management office whose sole responsibility is for managing projects. Ms. Doughtie recommends the IT PMO team be involved from intake to go live. In go live, people can make sure it is set up and ready to go, it is tested and prep work is done.
- Utilize the vendor to do testing. Their responsibility should be to go through and test the equipment, stress test it to make sure that thousands of users can go through that system without any issues.
- The Election Technical support should be provided by IT, who has experience. IT has about 59 people with their sole focus being technology.

Brian Middleton, District Attorney added that very little has been said about the vendor and the product the County purchased. The County spent a lot of money on this equipment and software and there are questions regarding this equipment. Any review should include the assessment of the suitability of what was purchased. Mr. Middleton indicated there should be an assessment of the number of people working for the Elections Administration. He believes from this conversation it can be concurred they are severely understaffed. Moving forward, we should have those independent audits to address those issues.

Linda Howell thanked the Commission and stated this was productive.

3. Adjournment.

The Elections Commission meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m. on Friday, December 18, 2020.

Moved to adjourn by Linda Howell and Cynthia Ginyard.

I attest to the accuracy of the foregoing minutes.



Laura Richard, County Clerk, Fort Bend County, Texas



DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Fort Bend County, Texas

BRIAN M. MIDDLETON

District Attorney

PUBLIC INTEGRITY REPORT TO THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY CONCERNING FORT BEND COUNTY 2020 PRESIDENTIAL-JOINT ELECTION EVENTS, FIRST DAY OF EARLY VOTING

On October 13, 2020, District Attorney Brian Middleton directed the Public Integrity Division to investigate the events of the first day of Early Voting for the 2020 Presidential-Joint Election in Fort Bend County. This directive was responsive to voting equipment failures, accusations of voter suppression due to the inability of many to get into the polls to vote because of excessive wait times, and concerns by citizens that their votes had not been counted. *The following report will address these issues only as they relate to the first day of Early Voting.*

Introduction

The mission of the Fort Bend County Elections Administrator is to ensure that elections are conducted fairly, accurately, efficiently and in accordance with all state and federal laws and mandates. The office is tasked with striving to encourage full political participation by all qualified electors of the county and to conduct its operations in such a manner that instills the citizens of Fort Bend County with a sense of fairness, accuracy, and security in the electoral process. The Fort Bend County Elections Commission, comprised of the County Judge (chair), County Clerk (vice chair), the County Tax Assessor-Collector (secretary) and the County Chair of each political party, has the authority to appoint the Elections Administrator. John Oldham was appointed to serve as the Elections Administrator for Fort Bend County in June of 2008. During Fiscal Year 2020, the Elections Administration (EA) had eleven fulltime employees, including that of the Administrator, with an approved budget of \$1,093,257 for EA and \$721,623 for Elections Services.

Between the months of October 2019 and April 2020, Fort Bend County entered into contracts to upgrade their voting equipment. The new voting system was intended to provide an efficient voting process with quick validation of voter registration check-in, curbside voting for disabled residents, , and allow for secure encryption of election data. Mostly importantly, the new voting system provided both scanned electronic and physical paper of the ballot each and every voter cast. Such promotes public confidence and allows for a higher level of transparency in the event of an election contest.

An October 8, 2019 contract with Election Systems & Software, LLC (ES&S) provided for the primary purchase of:

- 300 Express Touch voting machines to register voter selections with touch-screen technology and produce a paper ballot record of those choices,
- 300 DS200 scanners for scanning in, accepting and tabulating completed paper ballots, and
- Accompanying software.

An April 2, 2020 contract with VOTEC provided for the purchase of 145 Welcome Voter Kiosks designed to permit the voter to electronically verify their registration information and identify their precinct to produce an appropriate ballot. The use of magnetic card readers for drivers' licenses was supposed to provide faster voter verification and the kiosk tablet contained software to provide for signature capture. The contract included label printers, VoteSafe Field System software licenses and software support as well as hardware warranty for the first year.

The new voting system required a voter to confirm their identification and voter registration status at the registration kiosk. The approved voter then received a blank ballot (specific to their particular precinct) which the voter then inserted into the private voting machine booth. The voting machine tablet displayed the available election choices and the voter made selections using a stylus to make the process touch-free. The voter then reviewed his or her selections and when finalized, the printed ballot was produced. The final step involved the voter placing the completed ballot into the scanner where the ballot was scanned, the electronic data preserved on a thumb drive, and the paper ballot was stored within a locked box beneath the scanner.

According to John Oldham, the plan was to use the new equipment for several smaller scheduled elections leading up to the 2020 Presidential-Joint Election to provide both familiarity with the system as well as time to work out any difficulties. This did not occur, however, as the COVID-19 pandemic caused the smaller elections to be rescheduled and consolidated with the November 3, 2020 election cycle. In July of 2020, Governor Greg Abbott extended the early voting period for the November 3, 2020 election by an additional week to increase the number of days that polling places would be open to allow for appropriate social distancing and safety of citizens voting in person. This meant that instead of starting Early Voting October 19, 2020, it began on October 13, 2020.

Technological Issues on the First Day of Early Voting

Fort Bend County's Election Administration (EA) designated 30 polling sites for early voting which would be available to any Fort Bend County registered voter under the countywide polling system. On October 13, 2020, polls were scheduled to open at 8:00 a.m. for the first day of Early Voting. However, the registration kiosks that access the voter registration database used to verify the identity and voter eligibility of an individual would not start up. The issue was determined to be caused by a configuration error in the date/time stamp that had been programmed by Elections Administration personnel months prior to the election. The new start date of October 13, 2020 for Early Voting mandated by the Governor in response to the COVID emergency was not consistent with the date programmed into the system. When poll workers at each of the early voting locations attempted to make contact with the voter registration database, the JAR (Java Archive) file on the election check-in laptop did not recognize October 13th as a valid election day and would not function. The configuration error's

temporary fix involved manually cutting access to the Fort Bend County voter registration database for each of the registration laptops and manually changing the date on the election check-in laptop to allow a date change on the computer to match the program's existing JAR file date.

The November election cycle had been a particularly contentious one and it was generally anticipated that there could be record numbers of voters. As was experienced throughout the nation, many of the Fort Bend County early voting locations saw long lines of voters before the polls even opened and the delay caused by the technological issue resulted in even longer lines. The Election Administration's website tool designed to provide the public hourly reports of wait time for each of the polling places was not functioning. Oldham was the only person within the EA with rights to update the information on the website and, with the confusion caused by the early issues, the hourly updates necessary to keep the website current were not provided by poll workers. Even when wait time information was available, Oldham did not update the system throughout the day and, as a result, current information was not available to the public.

Robyn Doughtie, Director of Fort Bend County Information Technology (IT), learned of the issues with the Elections Administration (EA) computers and contacted the County Judge's office to offer her department's assistance. The technology purchases made by the Election Administration had not involved IT, and an offer of assistance for the upcoming election made by Doughtie to Oldham in September of 2020 received no response. Eventually, 28 IT employees assisted EA employees to effect the temporary fix override of the JAR file date and activate the registration process to bring the kiosks on line.

A second problem arose concerning certain ballot formats that conflicted with the computer reading of the voter information. The conflict resulted in the printer not permitting the completed ballot to be printed. This issue would also ultimately require a software fix but was temporarily handled by the poll workers manually entering the appropriate district selection for the problem ballots that would then be recognized by the printer. Some voters, observing the handwritten markings on their ballot, were concerned that their votes would not be valid due to the markings.

Ultimately, the JAR file issue and the conflict with the reading of certain ballot formats required a software fix that was developed and produced by an EA technician and had to be individually loaded on all of the laptops at the 30 early voting sites. Since there was no documentation on the impending JAR file fix, IT requested and EA provided a training session to the IT technicians on how to deploy the JAR file fix. Twenty-eight volunteers from IT were ultimately provided written instructions drafted by IT for deployment of the JAR file fix. The JAR file update for the individual kiosk tablets was accomplished after the polls closed by the tech team from IT. The polls were to close at 5 p.m., however due to the long lines, some polling places remained open until after 7 p.m. trying to process the voters who had been in line before the 5:00 cutoff. Work on the JAR file updates continued until 11 p.m.

Throughout the day, despite the temporary fix, there were still periods where voting equipment stopped working. Sometimes the computers at the polling places froze and had to be shut down and started up again. Some voters who were in the middle of the voting process when equipment failed then brought back online expressed concern that their votes would not be counted. Some voters reported that they had cleared the registration process and had been in the middle of marking their ballots when

computers went down. Rather than wait for the computers to re-initialize and be brought back online, these voters left and attempted to vote at another polling site but because they had already completed the registration process, they showed to have already voted and were turned away. To complete the voting process, these voters had to return to the original polling place where they had originally attempted to vote.

Smart Financial, the designated Voting Megacenter for Fort Bend County, had printer difficulties caused by a software issue that would also require an update. Curbside service for disabled voters at Smart Financial was not functional because going online with the MiFi caused an update to the laptop that would break the temporary fix that had been manually loaded. Smart Financial Centre had two broken voting booths and a broken electronic signature pad.

Four Corners also had issues with the printer as well as one of the tablets that captured signatures and the resulting line of people waiting to vote was determined to be at least 150 early on and increased to around 300 people at 4 p.m. Two tablets were replaced after they were broken by poll workers thumping on the screens when they did not come online as quickly as they felt they should. Additional tablets were replaced at Sugar Land Library, James Reese Technical Center and Jack Conference Center.

Logistical Issues on the First Day of Voting

Insufficient registration kiosks: In addition to the technological issues at the polling places, several logistical situations became apparent. Even where a polling place had plenty of voting booths, a bottleneck occurred at the registration kiosks. Voting Megacenter Smart Financial Centre had 60 voting booths but only 14 were reportedly used at any one time during the first day of early voting due to the bottleneck caused by the slow process time at the registration kiosks. When this issue was pointed out, Oldham responded that Smart already had four check in kiosks and there were no more to send them. Smart Financial Centre was not the only polling site experiencing the registration check-in bottleneck. Election judges at several polling locations requested additional kiosks to assist in processing the long lines of voters although at least one indicated that they would not have sufficient personnel to staff the additional kiosks. Initially it was thought that the backup in the voting process was partially due to the length of the ballots in conjunction to the lack of straight party ticket voting. However, when additional kiosks were added to many polling sites in the second week of Early Voting, the backup eased and the ballot size and lack of straight party ticket voting was deemed not to be relevant.

Physically challenging location: The Friday before early voting was to begin, Fort Bend Independent School District moved the usual voting location at Hightower High School in anticipation of a large voter turnout. Due to the lateness of the move, the EA had not been able to place additional equipment at that site to provide for expanded services before the first day of early voting. The new location at an athletic facility provided additional space but required able-bodied voters to stand in lines that snaked up a lengthy staircase (60+ steps) that provided no shade. An elevator was available, but it was poorly marked and only permitted two people to use it at a time. The lines were long and spread out due to social distancing mandated by the COVID-19 pandemic requirements. People stood in 90-degree

heat and voters, particularly the elderly, suffered with the wait made even longer because only one of two printers at the registration kiosk was working to produce ballots. Oldham said that he had not been able to view the new placement and he had no idea about the difficulty it presented. A request for additional registration kiosks and staff to work them was made.

Fleeing voter: The District Attorney's Office received a complaint concerning an elderly voter who left his polling place with his ballot in hand because nobody directed him to deposit it in the scanner as he left. Without the final scan of his ballot selections and the receipt of his printed ballot in the box, his vote would not be counted and under state law could not be redone ("fleeing voter"). When the problem was discussed with John Oldham, he indicated that signs in the voting booths directed the voter to the scanner before leaving. The voting machine tablet where voters made their selections also displayed the instruction upon returning the marked ballot. A request was made that a poll worker be stationed at the exit door to monitor voters as they leave and redirect those who had not stopped to place their ballots in the scanner to complete their voting process. An additional suggestion was made to have a poll worker greet voters as they stood in line to explain the new process of voting which included the additional new step of placing the marked ballot in the scanner.

COVID 19: The election judge at one polling place was only letting in 6 people at a time to vote which was causing a long line. Reportedly this was the election judge's attempt to control potential exposure to COVID-19, an especially valid concern where the Governor had issued a declaration that no one was required to wear a mask when voting or working the election.

Resolutions

Technology: As discussed above, the programming issue that prevented the voting computers from starting up on the morning of Tuesday, October 13, 2020 was temporarily corrected by a manual override. A JAR file fix was installed on each of the computers that evening. Problems with equipment continued throughout early voting and the 25 IT technicians who were originally volunteered for the initial crisis were temporarily assigned fulltime to assist EA throughout Early Voting as well as Election Day at the request of the County Judge. It was determined that part of the freezing of the tablets was caused by the voting system's communication system and that when the EO sent out an email to the polling judges' tablets, the system would freeze and not come back online without being turned off and then turned on again. Vendors VOTEC and ES&S were consulted about the equipment issues, a VOTEC representative was sent to attempt to resolve the problems. Although some of the technological issues resolved, the problem of the kiosks shutting down and not maintaining good Bluetooth connectivity remained. VOTEC agreed to finance 30 contractors for Election Day to work alongside EO and IT staff to ensure the proper operation of the voting equipment.

Logistics: Early Voting hours for the week of October 13, 2020 had been slated to end daily at 5 p.m. In an effort to compensate for the difficulties experienced on the first day of Early Voting, Commissioners Court unanimously agreed to extend the hours for the remainder of the first week of Early Voting to 7 p.m. to allow the public additional opportunities to exercise their constitutional right to

vote. Further, Commissioners Court augmented the hourly rate for the temporary poll workers and election site presiding officers/Election Judges.

After additional registration kiosks were sent to Hightower and Chasewood polling sites, EA had no more available inventory. This apparently was due to the fact that VOTEC had failed to make delivery on all of the ordered registration kiosks. County Judge K.P. George directed that whatever was necessary should be done to make the election system work and Doughtie placed an order for immediate delivery of 50 replacement tablets and 75 additional registration kiosks. Over the course of Early Voting, the additional equipment eased the bottleneck situation and allowed for better movement of voters.

The fact that Oldham was not updating the Elections website tool that showed hourly wait times for each of the poll sites became apparent on Thursday, October 15, 2020. Responsibility for maintaining the website tool and updating it was turned over to Doughtie and IT and from that date forward it was active and updated hourly with reports of wait times provided by technicians from IT.

On October 14, 2020, District Attorney Middleton visited several of the polling places about which he had received multiple complaints of voter suppression. After viewing the Hightower High School polling site and the long line of people that extended up the 60+ stairs, he discussed alternative placement of the voting equipment with Fort Bend ISD staff. They immediately proposed a plan to provide protective covering for the ground level sports court floor and County Judge K.P. George contacted Fort Bend ISD Superintendent Dupre to officially request the move. With final approval, the election judge for Hightower moved their voting equipment to the ground level the next day.

Despite requests to the election judges that a poll worker be placed at the exit of each polling place to ensure that no voter unintentionally left without depositing their completed ballot, the problem of "fleeing voters" continued. The election staff of the Rosenberg Annex assisted the District Attorney's Office with the production of a short public service announcement video to explain the complete voting process and the importance of scanning and depositing the ballot as the last step.

Discussion

This election was unique in that it was conducted in a period of unusual tension created in part by early accusations and allegations of anticipated election tampering and fraud. A high level of suspicion had resulted on both sides of the political spectrum and there were unspecified threats but very real fears of voter suppression and intimidation. It was anticipated that nationally there would be an extremely high voter turnout. The ability to conduct a transparent and efficient voting process was imperative. The problems experienced during the first day of Early Voting did little to assure the general public that their voting system was secure and functional, and instead fostered suspicions and appeared to validate fears of voter suppression. There is no guarantee of a perfect election and problems are to be expected, but there is no doubt that the credibility of Fort Bend County as an up-and-coming jurisdiction took a huge blow with the Election Office's performance on the first day of Early Voting.

There is no evidence at this time that any of the problems experienced in the first day of Early Voting were the result of organized or intentional criminal activity. Despite allegations that certain polling places had inadequate equipment which caused long lines and wait times designed to discourage certain populations from voting (these complaints to public officials came from various neighborhoods, individuals of various races, ethnicities and political persuasions), this investigation determined that there were deficiencies that affected every polling site rather than certain targeted sites.

The total number of in person votes registered on October 13, 2020 was 12,843. This was substantially lower than any other day of Early Voting but for one (Sunday, October 25, 2020). It is reasonable to assume that the technological difficulties that further aggravated already long lines for the first day of Early Voting had a negative impact on the totals for that day—exactly how much cannot be determined. The continued issues with computer tablets going down and freezing, printers not working, as well as Wifi and Bluetooth connectivity issues did not engender confidence in the voting system.

The exact number of “runaway voters” is unknown. The exact number of people who cleared the initial registration process at one polling place but who left after experiencing computer failures only to be turned away at other polling places and who did not ultimately return to the first polling place to vote is also unknown. An analysis of Fort Bend County election statistics may eventually provide some idea when the number of registered voters who had checked in with the voting system to exercise their right to vote is compared to the number of actual votes cast.

The equipment and software used for Early Voting for the 2020 Presidential-Joint Election was new and being used for the first time for a major election. Its first and only rollout had been the July 14, 2020 Primary Runoff Election and the ballots for that election were substantially smaller than those used for the Presidential-Joint Election. The dry runs that the EO anticipated leading up to the Presidential-Joint Election that would have provided an experiential baseline and allowed for the vetting of problems did not happen. Still, Fort Bend County had the third-highest turnout of any Texas county at 73.62% when excluding those counties with extremely small populations.

It appears there was no protocol in place for thorough field testing of the equipment at the locations where Presidential-Joint Election Early Voting and Election Day voting would take place prior to the election. Oldham indicated that he and his staff ran the various types of ballots to make sure that they all printed out properly and indicated that the “internal tests” he conducted on the voting system had been successful. However, the “internal tests” did not identify the date discrepancy that led to the failure of the system on the first day of Early Voting. Had field testing been conducted at each of the polling sites, the problems with Bluetooth connectivity might have been discovered ahead of time, as would the difficulties posed by the internal email communication system that caused tablets to freeze.

Best practices are professional procedures that are accepted or prescribed as being most effective. The new voting system that the EO rolled out for the 2020 Presidential-Joint Election constituted a network of computer technology that was deserving of a technology project manager and staff that would promote and ensure that best practices were employed in preparation for its deployment. First, there was no documentation for the various programs or equipment that would enable staff or other technicians to learn the system, to record errors so that they would not be repeated, and to train others. Second, until the involvement of the IT Department, there was no tracking or written documentation of system/equipment problems along with their ultimate resolution which would be the basis for a proper evaluation of the voting system after the election. It is only through careful and constructive evaluation that improvements can be made to the system. Third, best practices would dictate that field testing of equipment and programs should be done well ahead of deployment. The EO plan for field testing during smaller elections prior to the Presidential-Joint Election was a partial but incomplete plan to test the equipment since not all of the proposed polling places would be involved. When those plans were scrapped with the COVID-19 pandemic, apparently there was no backup plan for any other field testing. Finally, there was a lack of contingency planning that would have developed worst case scenarios and strategies for dealing with them. This was most evident when the JAR file fix was being administered and an IT technician asked what would happen if it did not work (there had been no testing of the fix). The response from the Elections Administrator was that they had done all they could and would have to wait until the following morning to see if it would work.

EO staffing should also be examined in light of the 2020 Presidential-Joint Election. The present staff allocations were clearly not adequate to handle the administration of this election in a prompt and efficient manner. The development of the JAR file fix by the EO technician which would ultimately correct the date problem was critical and promptly achieved. However, without the technicians provided by IT to implement the initial temporary fix and then later load the JAR file fix at each of the Early Voting sites, the first days of Early Voting could have been a disaster. The continued assignment of the 28 IT technicians throughout Early Voting and then the 30 additional contractors employed for Election Day is indicative of the need for additional staffing, even if only on a part-time basis for administration of major elections.

Limited EO staff also apparently fueled the decision to hire an outside contractor to move and place the voting machines at the polling sites (employees from the Road and Bridge Department had provided this service in the past). Large-scale moving of elections equipment, which is necessary since some of the equipment weighs several hundred pounds, had to occur prior to Early Voting and again for Election Day. It became apparent on Election Day that the movers were placing equipment without EO supervision at individual polling sites when one polling place opened for voting without a complete set of equipment and was unable to function. With appropriate staff available to monitor and supervise the moving of the equipment, the Elections Administrator should have been made aware of the situation at Hightower High School being an unacceptable location and a resolution reached before the first day of Early Voting.

The volunteer election officials presiding at the polls tend to be older and less familiar with computer technology. Hands on training for them was provided by the EO so that they would be familiar with the new voting equipment, but training on troubleshooting all of the potential difficulties that could arise with the voting equipment was not a priority because the persistent problems were unanticipated. No written guidelines were provided to assist the election judges in the event of difficulty and the expectation was that they would communicate their difficulties to the EO by voting system email or call.

The staffing of the election polling places is left in the hands of the volunteer election judges and decisions as to assignments of responsibilities for the day-to-day handling of the tasks to complete the election process are also within the province of the election judges. Oldham indicated that he left it up to the election judges to let him know how many staff they would need for their individual polling places. In light of the anticipated record numbers of voters, the fact that this would be the first major election using the new voting equipment, and the persistent claims of expected voter fraud and intimidation, strong recommendations as to placement of staff within the polling place as well as assignments of duties may have alleviated some issues. For example, posting a worker at the polling place exit to ensure that all ballots are scanned and submitted in the ballot box prior to a voter leaving would have alleviated the "fleeing voter" problem. Posting a worker at the polling place entrance to explain the new three-step voting process also could have alleviate that issue. The Texas Secretary of State's guidance on this issue is also lacking. [Election Advisory No. 2020-09.] Such guidance focusses on eliminating valid votes instead of mandating actions by local EOs. The guidance does not even suggest the latter best practice. Moreover, the Secretary of State did not update their advisory concerning the fleeing-voter problem after the Governor's declaration of an emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Having enough staff to allow for adequate time to provide explanations to concerned voters about the legitimacy of their votes even when the equipment stopped working may not have been absolutely necessary but would have gone a long way to ensure confidence in the system. And having enough staff to post one poll worker outside to observe the activities outside of the polling

place would have boosted voter confidence that someone was watching out for their safety and protecting them from intimidation.

It is unclear whether the failure of the EO website tool that provided hourly wait times for each of the poll sites was a problem created by EO limited staffing or caused by an inability of the Elections Administrator to delegate the responsibility. Had the website tool been functioning properly on the first day of Early Voting, it is possible that citizens might have seen that there were long lines at almost all of the polling places and decided to wait until another day to exercise their right to vote instead of joining already long lines.

The job of Elections Administrator is massive. It requires a thorough familiarity with technical equipment and software as well as the law that impacts the election process and voters' ability to exercise their rights. It requires the ability to coordinate people who are volunteers as well as the delivery and recovery of large amounts of equipment from multitudes of sites. Finally, it requires the foresight to not only anticipate problems but understand how those problems might be perceived within the community. It requires a person who can think outside of the box instead of merely relying on institutional experience to deal with issues that may not affect the final numbers of votes at the end, but are perceived as real problems by the public. It requires a politic (not political) person who can be sensible and judicious under the circumstances, even when a problem may ultimately be of no import to the outcome of the process. In this election, with tensions and suspicions high, it was important to deal with perceptions.

This election was unlike any previous elections. It is only fair to acknowledge that more was expected of the EO than in previous elections. Oldham assumed responsibility for the JAR file error that affected the startup of the computers on the first day of Early Voting. However, he was unwilling to recognize that what should work theoretically does not necessarily always work in real life and that a good flow of numbers on his master computer screen did not necessarily mean that citizens were getting through the voting process in an efficient manner. When the problems created by the bottleneck at the registration kiosks were identified on the first day of Early Voting, Oldham insisted that the EO had enough equipment in place and was resistant to altering the allocation or ordering additional equipment. Merely looking at a number of completed votes on a computer failed to take into account the true slowness of the operation and the fact that many different members of the public were not just inconvenienced but horribly put at risk due to the heat and long lines that did not move at all in the morning. This disconnect between what should work and what did work, a laissez faire attitude and resistance to corrective suggestions continued over the course of several days until the County Judge ordered that whatever needed to be done to make the election system work properly be done. Resolution of the bottleneck problem was achieved not by the EO but by the IT Department's issuance of an emergency order to VOTEC for additional equipment to address the need.

Ultimately, the issues experienced by the voters of Fort Bend County on the first day of Early Voting will have to be reviewed and analyzed by the Elections Commission, as will the performance of the Election Administrator. Fort Bend County is no longer a little jurisdiction but one of the wealthiest, most diverse counties in the state. Its citizens have the right to expect an election experience that is conducted in a manner that instills the citizens of Fort Bend County with a sense of fairness, accuracy, and security in the electoral process.

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Overview:

This document summarizes the support provided by the Fort Bend County Information Technology (IT) department for the November 3, 2020 Election. IT support began on October 13, 2020 and concluded on Election Day, November 3, 2020. A timeline of events is detailed below followed by a summary of the Tabulation Process related to the bad drive from Smart Financial. IT conducted two after action meetings with IT support. Next Support Tickets and Phone Bank Stats followed by IT Recommendations.

Timeline:

10/13/2020 9:00AM - IT was informed that Elections Administration (EA) staff had the wrong Election Date in the JAR files on the Elections laptops. This caused the Elections software to think it was not the right Election date. EA requested that IT turn off access to our copy of the voter database.

10/13/2020 9:50AM - EA informed IT that all locations were now voting except for Fulshear HS. An EA tech was on the way to resolve their issue. EA staff directed all Election site workers to turn off their technology connection tools and use the local copy of the voter information database.

10/13/2020 11:29AM - IT received reports that printing was an issue at Smart Financial. Dispatched two techs to the location to assess and resolve issues. Tech reported issues:

- They cannot print, it is a software, not a hardware issue, but this cannot be resolved until an update.
- Poll workers manually changed the date to resolve the check-in issue.
- They cannot use the supplied hotspot, because if they go online, the laptop date will update and break check-in again.
- The rest of the issues are mostly logistical with mail-in vs. in-person, precinct numbers.

IT scheduled a training session with EA to learn how to deploy the JAR file fix. IT recruited several staff for last minute evening support to deploy VOTEC recommended fix to 30 Early Voting polling locations.

10/13/2020 12:30PM - EA informed IT that the printing issue was a problem with their system and that it would be fixed with the JAR file update applied later that night.

10/13/2020 1:00PM - Webex meeting with VOTEC, EA and IT. Discuss early voting issues and how to resolve.

10/13/2020 2:00PM - IT Technical Trainer dispatched to EA to document JAR file fix. EA did not have documentation.

10/13/2020 4:45PM – EA staff to teach IT volunteers how to retrieve the data from and update the JAR files for the voter lookup at 30 early voting polling locations. IT Management assigned a location to the 28 volunteers. Each volunteer was given printed instructions for deploying JAR file (created by IT), a usb flash drive to copy files from the kiosk laptops, a usb flash drive with the JAR file update to apply to each kiosk laptop and the Election Judge laptop. Volunteers had to wait until the polls closed before applying update. After applying update, they were instructed to return to EA in RoseAnnex with the retrieved files and the paper instructions which held various passwords.

10/13/2020 6:00 – 11:00PM - Challenges with deploying JAR file update. Some Election Judges were allowing voters in after 5PM poll closure time. Volunteers had to wait until the last person left before proceeding. Bowie MS tech had to come back because the voter line was so long. The lights were due to shut off at 10PM. IT Manager went back out to Bowie with a flashlight to pack up the equipment and bring back to RoseAnnex. Tompkins HS kiosk laptops needed the date changed in order to apply update. The Election Judge laptop received error message not allowing the JAR file update to be applied. Encountered “System resources are busy” messages on several laptops. Once the JAR file was updated each volunteer brought their usb flash drives to EA in RoseAnnex. EA staff took the two drives and did not seem to have a system for checking off each location or determining which one contained the copied files. While waiting for IT staff to arrive EA – Lisa was teaching other EA staff how to deploy/setup kiosks. No documentation or steps to follow. Everything was done via Lisa’s memory.

IT asked EA how do we know if the JAR file fix works. John said they have done all they can do for now, won’t know until 8am the next day if anything needs to change. We were told to be on standby. If it goes wrong John and Lisa don’t have an answer.

10/14/2020 8:00AM – IT onsite on some early voting locations. EA has confirmed that all sites came up except for two that were operator error. Informed that curbside tablet was not working at Smart Financial. IT was informed that an EA tech would be dispatched to resolve.

10/14/2020 10:30AM – In response to reports of kiosks having issues received the following update from EA.

Issue at Four Corners is a bad tablet . Per Lisa, there are several tablets that were damaged by the poll workers and they have the "screen of death". EA has a tech in the field that is currently replacing tablets at Four Corners, Sugarland Library, James Reese Tech Center, and Jack Conference Center. From what she told me, this will exhaust the spare tablets. She said that they were talking to Votec about getting additional tablets. No ETA on getting those additional tablets.

She said that they are sending additional equipment out to HighTower and Chasewood, but after this, they are out of any additional equipment that can be sent out. They are expecting more kiosk shipments around the 20th or 21st. She did not know how many. Those are really intended for Nov 3rd.

10/14/2020 4:53PM – Inquired with Votec if IT could use standard FBC laptops from our inventory. The voting kiosks are proprietary and the software has not been tested on any other devices. Votec - Ruby stated that they are shipping out 50 replacement tablets that are expected to arrive by around 11 AM tomorrow morning. Also, sometime tomorrow, they are supposed to be shipping 30 kiosks units. Those are expected to arrive middle of next week. They are prepping another 25 kiosk to be shipped by this Friday and expected to arrive end of next week. Per Ruby, John wanted both of those shipments for November 3rd.

10/14/2020 7:00PM – IT Management meeting to discuss plan to support Elections.

10/14/2020 8:30PM – IT Managers met individually with their teams to discuss responsibility and plan resources. All IT staff were working from home on a rotating schedule. All staff are working remotely temporarily put on hold through November 4.

10/15/2020 9:15AM – Reports that Hightower High School: 1) Needs additional kiosk and printer asap (one delivered yesterday didn't work). 2) Significant lines at Four Corners due to technology issues. 3) Chasewood needs an additional kiosk. They were supposed to get it yesterday but they still don't have it.

10/15/2020 11:29AM – Bowie and Fulshear experiencing long lines. Bowie was able to receive additional equipment which helped. IT and John discussed logistics with receiving equipment and delivering to polling locations. Cinco Ranch Library, Tompkins HS and Our Lady of Guadalupe requesting additional kiosks.

10/15/2020 3:30PM – 20 kiosks came into the mail center. Hands on training session for IT resources. IT Director delivered additional kiosk to Our Lady of Guadalupe and supplies to Jones Creek.

10/15/2020 7PM – IT sync meeting to prepare for supporting Elections effective 10/16/2020. Email communication to IT Election Support group shortly before midnight providing documentation and tips. Al Rabba getting additional kiosk, tech needs to make sure it is running correctly and connected to the hotspot. Tech will be getting a new wifi at our lady and tablets at Jones Creek. Cinco going to have to setup a mifi to a new kiosk. Tompkins getting a new mifi and kiosk and need to connect all kiosks to it.

10/16/2020 7AM – Elections hotline is turned on. When the Election Judges need technical support they will call their regular Election support line and press option 2 for technical assistance. IT staff is deployed to all 30 polling locations with some having more than one location to support. 2 IT Service Desk staff are answering the technical support line and logging issues as tickets. Escalation to 2 IT staff members who are directly contacting VOTEC for resolution. Webex Teams chat established to collaborate on site issues. ElectSupport email distribution group setup. All tickets will be emailed to this distribution group. The responsibility for reporting wait times was moved to IT. Each onsite tech was to report their location's wait time hourly. Redirected old wait time link to the new website as some members of the public were accessing the old link. IT Director delivered additional kiosk to Cinco Ranch Library. Also added a new kiosk to Tompkins high school, changed out hotspot and connected 3 kiosks to the new hotspot.

10/16/2020 12:30PM – Notified that 20 more kiosks were in at the Mail Center.

10/16/2020 3:15PM – IT fixed website issue with voter registration search not working on a mobile device.

10/16/2020 4PM – About 15 polling locations lost connectivity. The hotspots said they were connected but we had not activity out of the kiosks. Cause is unknown. The service provider confirmed there was no outage but acknowledged poor connectivity in a couple of areas.

10/16/2020 5PM – Fulshear and Bowie reporting kiosk connection issues. Fulshear running with one kiosk and Bowie completely down. IT Director purchased a new usb wireless dongle at the recommendation of VOTEC. Changed it out at Fulshear with no success. Kiosk would not boot up to the correct tablet. The laptop was trying to connect to the other kiosk tablet and not the one attached. It wouldn't even read the wireless mouse. It saw my adapter but no option to turn Bluetooth on. IT Operations Manager changed out the kiosk at Bowie successfully.

10/17/2020 6AM – IT restarted services on the elections management server. Appears to have gone down again at 8AM.

10/17/2020 – IT staff onsite when polls opened. Once all issues were stabilized, they were on call until the last voter left. Bowie went down again. EA staff delivered a new kiosk. IT Director setup the new kiosk with now two functioning check in kiosks. A request was sent to VOTEC to have someone onsite assisting with issues.

10/17/2020 9:26AM - Cinco Ranch was trying to figure out why the cumulative totals on the kiosks were not matching the cumulative totals on the DS200 machines. She said they are about 1,000 off (the DS200s being ahead). She said on the first day of voting there was a glitch that required them to manually adjust the date on each of the kiosks. Could that have caused the vote count to be reset when they did that the first day? John's response: It could be a number of things, but here is my best guess This was one of the sites that not everything was backed up on Tuesday night. Lisa had to get audit data off of these units in order to get history of who voted. Votec had to extract info from that. We think it could have doubled the count from these particular units. It does not adversely affect anything except create a little more work on our end. I hope to figure out tomorrow if that is what it is by printing check in logs from Monday to see if some voters names are listed twice. WE are seeing this at Cinco & a couple of others, so when we report voter turnout we have to compare the Vote Safe number against the ballots actually cast so we don't over report.

10/17/2020 4:20PM – Bowie is down to one check in kiosk again. Judge George requested IT assistance. EA staff delivered a new kiosk to Bowie. IT Director installed the new kiosk. Bowie back up and going with 2 working check in kiosks.

10/18/2020 – Brief call with EA to discuss issues and any assistance needed of IT

10/18/2020 6:51PM – IT web team updated polling location wait times to reflect when sites are open/closed.

10/18/2020 8:36PM – IT emailed VOTEC a summary of the issues, quantity received and locations where the issues appeared.

10/19/2020 11AM – IT established an all-day open Webex meeting with VOTEC support.

10/19/2020 11AM – Received reports that kiosk down at Greatwood. IT Director picked up a new kiosk from RoseAnnex and replaced kiosk at Greatwood. Back to 2 working check in kiosks.

10/19/2020 3PM – Mike Sosa with VOTEC arrives onsite. Mike is taken to RoseAnnex to learn more about the issues and troubleshoot. IT Operations Manager takes him to Bowie to resolve the issues there. VOTEC recommendation is to replace Bluetooth dongles with updated ones they are supplying. Some issues remained. Received about 10 usb dongles to change out.

10/20/2020 – IT Operations drove to several polling locations with Mike Sosa – VOTEC to triage issues. Changed out dongle at Cinco Ranch Library, Tompkins and Fulshear. Mike worked with several in IT triaging, applying fixes and changing out the dongle. In some instances changing out the dongle didn't work. IT requested that VOTEC provide 3 – 5 onsite techs for Election Day. VOTEC responded that they do not have the staffing to supply a large number of people that are familiar with the WelcomeVoter kiosks.

10/20/2020 4:33PM – IT emailed EA requesting: the process for deploying to 86 Election Day locations and when does it start? Can you provide a list of the number of Kiosk that will be placed at each location for Nov 3? Are you going to be pulling the temp staff in to help, if so is it the 5 – 10 you mentioned as a possibility? I need the list of sites and address with poor signal so we can test the other solution. What assistance are you guys going to need or is what we are doing today what we do on Nov 3? Sufficient response received from EA.

10/20/2020 5:30PM – Learned via Mike Sosa that EA staff – Fred was running 187,000 updates on voter records on 10 laptops. Using the same wifi network as the polling locations. Appeared to cause issues at several polling locations. Possibly the reason why random connectivity issues appeared throughout the Election cycle. IT Operations Manager asked Mike to recommend that Fred stop running updates while polls are open.

10/21/2020 – Mike Sosa – VOTEC leaves. COVID exposure at Katy Reserve. Quarantined IT tech for 2 weeks. On the task force stated that IT does not recommend updating 187,000 records in the middle of the day in the middle of the election. EA – John said it wasn't a big deal and that was doing something small.

10/21/2020 11:32AM – Emailed Mike the list of tickets we have seen. The continuous issue we run into is that the tablet loses connectivity to the laptop throughout the day. Only one of the machines we swapped the dongle on in the field seems to be working more consistently. The others have all lost the connection. Restarting the votesafe app has worked on reconnecting most of the time. Some instances requires a shutdown of the equipment which adds time to the process.

10/22/2020 – Tested out moving usb dongle from the docking station to the side port on the laptop and that specific machine has not lost connection at all. Also recommended that poll workers remind voters to turn off their phones. Believe that Bluetooth on their phone is causing interference with the voting equipment. IT provided EA with updated curbside voting instructions.

10/23/2020 11AM – Meeting with VOTEC to discuss all issues. VOTEC offered to pay for the technical support contractors that FBC IT is bringing in for Election Day support.

10/26/2020 – Election Day kiosk allocation list received from EA

10/27/2020 – Informed EA that IT would purchase a wifi booster for those locations with poor connectivity. Emailed VOTEC list of kiosk allocation and quote for IT tech support contractors.

10/28/2020 – VOTEC has requested that IT send log files from the troublesome kiosks.

10/28/2020 – Emailed John list of items IT will need for Election Day. A written plan for the moving and testing of equipment once early voting ends in preparation for Election Day. If equipment is to be removed from existing polling places, a description of what equipment will be removed. The plan for removing data from the voting machines at the end of early voting. A list of tasks that IT will need to perform at the end of the day on Election Day. Live Help messages cause some kiosks to go offline. Need communication plan for poll workers and Elections staff.

10/30/2020 – VOTEC sent a patch to update the JAR file. It should help with modifying backup logging of collected signatures to append the last signature to the log file instead of rewriting the entire log file every time a signature is captured. IT Director refused to deploy patch without additional information about what the patch does. No information was shared about testing. IT would not recommend applying a fix without a deployment plan. EA staff – Lisa deployed the patch to 18 of 30 early voting locations.

11/1/2020 – IT informed Task Force members and HHS of COVID positive employee at Reese Tech.

11/2/2020 10AM – ES&S and VOTEC trained IT employees and IT contractors.

11/3/2020 6:31AM – Mike Sosa – VOTEC messaged all IT support: Elections didn't have a chance to get the ED kiosks online to receive updates so please have them connect to the mifi and have votesafe logged in as soon as possible to start getting those updates. IT asked what the updates were and how it would impact Elections. Mike said updates are everything that has happened since the JAR file was created in the election management platform and Votesafe. IT asked what would happen if we didn't get the updates applied. Mike responded that if the machines are offline with no updates at all then if someone who came to vote in early voting could possibly come and vote again. As long as they are online then Votesafe will automatically look up the person they are searching for in the updates to grab it first before doing other updates. So just having them online is good enough for the time being. At 7AM I requested that no one allow a voter entry until update has been performed. Mike responded: They can accept people as long as they are Online, if for whatever reason they go offline then do not accept

11/3/2020 6AM – Jones Creek entry gate was locked. Setup was delayed by 10 minutes. Kiosk power cable missing from Kempner, Our Lady of Guadalupe (tech had her own). Fairgrounds curbside tablet missing power cord (tech had their own). Ballot scanner missing at Westlake, Sugar Creek Country Club. Judge kicked out tech support from River Park Rec Center. Some Tompkins voting machines have early voting and others have 9027 all precincts. Several kiosks still have wrong time. Cross Creek Ranch Community Center, Elkins, Townewest Towne Hall not printing ballots. Kiosk won't allow check in without correcting timestamp. Because of tech issues and poll workers not knowing how to perform setup Crockett MS, Sugar Creek CC and Chasewood opened around 8AM. Issues were steadily coming in for 2 hours. Within Webex Teams, grouped polling locations into the same quadrants that EA setup. Increased response time with specific groupings. Maryam curbside not working. Issues stabilized around 11AM.

11/3/2020 – IT techs attempted to install wifi booster at Mustang. Coordinated with EA that this was a site with poor connectivity. Election Judge at Mustang threatened to call the police on IT techs because she was not aware that they were coming. IT techs left. Reassigned tech to a new location. River Park Rec Center judge kicked out IT tech support. Ridge Point HS judge kicked out IT tech. Reassigned tech to a new location. Ridge Point HS also didn't realize they had a second kiosk in the cabinet until pointed out by IT Director. IT Director requested that poll workers inform voters to turn off cell phones upon entering. Known issue causing interference with check in kiosks. Judge was not receptive to the suggestion. Several polling locations complied which seemed to help with preventing Bluetooth interference.

11/3/2020 7:30AM – Remote collections begins. RoseAnnex, Jones Creek, Precinct 2, Sienna. Poll workers will bring their usb fobs and ballot reports to one of the remote collection locations. Antivirus software at Sienna preventing file upload. Building access for IT staff and securing the facility afterwards was challenging. Multiple calls to gain access to Sienna. Rerouted poll workers to Precinct 2. Finished shortly before midnight.

11/4/2020 – Documented tabulation process as a result of the bad drive at Smart Financial.

Tabulation Process:

The following documents the process to tabulate ballots after encountering bad drive at Smart Financial.

Election Systems & Software (ES&S)

Tabulation room layout

There are two separate systems in the room, one is connected to the elections network for Fort Bend County and was used on election night for uploading all the votes. The other system is completely isolated to itself with no network or internet access. These two separate systems consist of a server and two workstations.

Pre-elections:

When creating the USB drives for the DS200 at the election sites, an elections worker enters the information that is placed on the ballots county-wide and for each precinct. This information includes the precinct number, candidate name, proposition, etc. This information is repeated to the second system by hand. An example, Missouri city Mayor candidate Yolanda Ford, if in one system her name is spelled correctly, but the other is misspelled, then the drives can only be tabulated on the system that has the matching information to the USB drive. As was explained this happened with the system used on election night and cause an issue where multiple errors were displayed, and the drives had to be moved to the other system in order to read correctly. As explained by John, during this process the two USB sticks created are “married” to each other for the duration for their use, this prevents them from being use in different places.

These systems run the Electionware software made by the company “Election systems & Software.”

DS200 – In-Person Ballots

DS200 is the machine where the ballots are cast. This is typically managed by the site judge or poll workers, although some sites didn’t want to manage the USB drives and left it to elections workers. The drives can only hold a certain number of ballots, so some had to be switched out. The sites had USB drives for early voting, and different ones for Election Day.

The process explained below is how the votes are captured to be uploaded. This process of shutdown does not include instructions on screen of why they are waiting for the circle to finish and who is doing this process as some locations were removing them, some were leaving them plugged in, some let elections workers handle the drives. This is a two USB drive system with a primary and backup drive. This process if done incorrectly can cause the drives to be “damaged” and needing to be redone as it wouldn’t record all the votes.

- Shutdown process
 - When shutting down, a spinning circle will be on screen, during this process votes are written to the USB drives
 - Although there is nothing on screen saying so, this process can take a long time depending on how many votes are being written. i.e. if there are 800 votes, time will pass quickly, if there are 12,000 it can take over 30 minutes.
 - Nothing on Screen warning user to not pull USB drives during this process. If it is a poll worker, they may be unaware that they need to wait this process out and not just pull the drives as it can stop the data from being written.
 - Once circle is done, it is shut down and drives can be pulled

Mail-in Ballots

Machine used – DS450

The DS450 is a “High Speed Scanner and tabulator”

This is where the mail-in ballots are processed after being accepted by an election worker.

This machine acts the same way as the DS200 and writes the data to USB drives to be taken for tabulation.

- Once ballots are verified by hand by worker. Ballots are fed into a scanning machine, the DS450.
- Once the machine has ballots, they are written to the USB drives
- USB sticks are then uploaded into Electionware for tabulation

Vote Upload

Electionware software is also used for tabulation after the votes are taken from the DS200 and DS450. In the beginning of my visit, John was running both machines to upload the USB drives. Chase came in the room later to help give the drives to John from the bags they were stored in. John was going over the list in the software to determine which sites were completed and which sites still needed to be uploaded. After a little time, Chase sat down to run one machine while John ran the other. Another election worker came in to hand them USB sticks they needed. During this process explained below, the election

workers, in this case from my observation John and Chase, were uploading the votes to calculate them together.

Electionware (Software for USB drive/site creation and tabulation of votes)

- Run software and plug first USB drive in. It does not matter the order.
- Press “Start Load.” This will begin the upload process
- The software knows which location/site/ballot machine based on the initial creation of the USB drive
- Drive will begin upload of votes. This process may take a while per drive depending on how many votes are being uploaded. Once the progress bar reaches 100% the drive upload is complete and can go to the next drive.
- Once the first USB drive is done, there is no need to safely eject the drive, just unplug the drive and plug in the next one, it will auto-recognize and upload the next drive. Continue this process until all drives are uploaded. Once complete press “Stop Load” and you can print reports.
- Both upload workstations are connected to the server and the uploads are replicated between the two live so both can be used at the same time for uploads.

After Tabulation

- Reports are printed and checked over for completion
 - This report gives ballot totals for each race
- Once this report is finished it is then taken to be entered in the Secretary of State portal. This is a manual process of an elections worker transcribing from the printed report into fields on the Secretary of State portal and not automatic upload.
- Results are also in the same process uploaded to 3rd party vendor Scytl for upload to website
 - These numbers are added as new totals to upload
 - i.e. Senate seat MJ Hagar has 500 votes already in, they type in 100 from the report. The results update to 600 as the new total.

Notes

- Election Systems & Software – Makers of Electionware election management system, DS200, DS450, Expressvote touchscreen voting system
- The networked systems were used for tabulation on election night, isolated systems used the next day for recount.

Observations

- John stated a DS200 is missing, it was supposed to go to a site, they still can't find it
- USB drive bag was missing and found at noon on 11/4
- Chase came in and was looking for a box of USB drives. After searching the room, he found they were not in there but out in the larger counting area in a purple storage tub. He didn't know who moved them.
- When drives are tabulated, they were tossed into a printer paper box lid on the floor under the desk, one missed and ended up against the wall. I pointed this out since it was hard to see from where they were sitting.
- They missed tabulating an absentee ballot USB drive. Printed the results to upload to the Secretary of State portal and found it was missing then. Came back and was searching for the

drive under paperwork on the desk. Once found they uploaded it and reprinted the report. Previously mistaken report was already uploaded to Scytl for display on the website.

- They were setting the USB drives on the desk in a pile in front of the keyboard, once they were uploading them, they were throwing them into a lid on the floor. Probably a better method would be having the person that hands them the drive take the drive and put it back in its bag.

After Action Summary:

The following summary captures feedback from Information Technology staff who were assigned to support Elections (Early Voting and Election Day) at various Fort Bend County Election Sites. After Action meetings are standard and provide a detailed critical summary or analysis of a past event, created to re-assess decisions and consider possible alternatives for future scenarios.

Election Equipment Issues (Hardware):

- Almost all locations had the issue with equipment being frozen or non-responsive (ballot printer, or tablet would disconnect from laptop, voting machine ballot jam, or DS200 Ballot jam) and whole system needed to be re-started which resulted in longer wait times.
- Requested replacement equipment never reached to sites who requested it.
- Hardware setup possibly had too many “point of failure” (laptop, tablet, printer, voting machines, and DS200) and some of these hardware belonged to different vendors, difficult to pin point which hardware may have been causing an issue.
- The Express Touch (Curb Side voting machine) – many complained that they were too large and heavy.
- Smart Financial and Tompkins had wrong precinct printed on ballots

Suggestions to Improve Equipment Issues (Hardware):

- Work with vendor on a better design if possible OR a single vendor who can provide a better solution for Elections.
 - For example: Montgomery County printed just one code for voter and voter would then go to the voting machine and enter the code, make selections on the machine and hit submit on same machine to submit their vote.
- Find a way to hardwire the tablet to the PC instead of the Bluetooth, eliminate the docking station if possible, as most devices worked better with direct connection or using the USB HUB.
- Assign more resources to do supply run for sites. As some IT staff had to use their own cables to make equipment work as requested hardware never reached requested sites.
 - Additional supplies would help at each site.
 - Inventory checklist at each site would help as well to staff has an idea of what is assigned to that specific site.
 - Additional supplies assigned to each site would be helpful as well.
- Provide a way to install patches, updates or fixes for application without external media (place a restricted and secure share on the admin’s login desktop if possible) so 30+ locations are not waiting for 1 person to drive everywhere to install the patch.

Election Equipment Issues (Software):

- Issues with LIVE Help on VoteSafe application was freezing up for some locations.

- Not same voter information came up for voter on all Kiosks. One Kiosk displayed incorrect DOB for a voter and same search method on a different Kiosk for same voter pulled correct DOB/information.
- Languages option was limited to English and Spanish. Affidavits were offered attesting that the information being conveyed was accurate. This held up voting lines. More languages should be loaded.
- Date & Time displayed incorrectly on some voting machines.
- Printer printed wrong precinct at one of the Kiosks at SMART financial even though VoteSafe application displayed it correctly on laptop.
- “You voted” – green check mark on Voting machines after selecting your candidates was a confusion for some voters as they thought they were done voting.

Suggestions to Improve Equipment Issues (Software):

- Report issues noticed with Software (displaying correct information in application but printing incorrect information, Live Help freezing application, etc.) to vendor.
- Provide more languages option for voters as lot of voters had a need for languages other than English and Spanish.
- Hearing impaired voters didn’t have access to disposable headphones. Some poll workers didn’t know they had headphones which wouldn’t be preferred during COVID pandemic.

Election Voting Facility Issues:

- One of the facility lost power and was non-functional until power was restored
- Many facilities did not have a good cell/data signal.
- Setup polling sites in advance of early/election day

Suggestions to Improve Voting Facility Issues:

- If possible, do an inspection of the site (with Fire Marshal) along with IT staff to determine if the site has any issues (power, bad data signal etc.) prior to selecting the site as an Election site.
- Have UPS as back up just in case, even after an inspection something goes wrong.
- Selected Election sites should be Fire code certified. Al Rabba location had the poll workers be moved to another room by the Fire Marshal.
- Building owner at one polling location told poll workers they needed to be out by 8PM
- No close alternative sites to Four Corners

Service Desk Phone bank:

- 6 staff were assigned to Service desk and it was very busy early in the morning to support all calls coming in.

Suggestions to Improve Service Desk Phone bank:

- If possible, during peak hours (first thing in AM) assign more resources to answer calls.

Resources Issues:

- It was difficult for 1 staff to support 4 Election Sites especially if all 4 sites had issues first thing in the morning.
- Different Election Day crew for some sites. Early voting crew moved to a different location away from area they were familiar with.

- Several locations either kept current machines or got a hybrid of new and current.

Behavior Guideline and Professional Standards:

- Poll workers at Chasewood on ED consistently on their phone which confused voters.
- Chasewood poll workers and voters made several sexist comments. One poll worker made a sexist comment to a voter's daughter causing the mother to leave with her child.
- Quail Valley Elementary male poll worker continued to make advances with the female IT tech.

Suggestions to Improve Resources Issues:

- It is difficult in the morning for 1 resources to make sure all their multiple sites are up and running on time. If possible assign 1 resource per site in the morning to make sure all sites are up and running and ready to go when voting starts.

TEAMS Chat Issues:

- Too many messages in the chat group and sometimes it was harder to keep up.

Suggestions to Improve TEAMS Chat Issues:

- Chat groups were very helpful, but breaking it further with specific area was even more helpful.

Judges & Poll Workers:

- Overall communication was an issue as Judges and Poll Workers were not aware that IT staff was assigned to support their location.
- Some Poll workers were not as knowledgeable as others.

Suggestions to Improve Judges and Poll Workers:

- Provide better communication to Judges at each site of what is the involvement of IT at each site.
- Provide additional training to Poll workers who need it as some of the Poll workers were moved to different locations to support 80+ Election Day sites.
- Some judges didn't fill out the paperwork because it was a nuisance. Sometimes didn't do provisional ballots.

Reporting Wait Times:

- It was difficult to follow standard (report wait time top of every hour) if you were covering multiple locations.

Suggestions to Improve Reporting Wait Times:

- If reporting times manually, only report when wait time changes from "Green" to "Red" or from "Green" to "Yellow".
- Better option would be to find a way to automate the process of reporting wait times.

Documentation & Training:

- Lack of detailed documentation was an issue.
- Lack of training on equipment was an issue.
- No video for Citizens on County's website explaining how voting process works (check in, insert ballot, select candidates, print ballot and submit ballot) was an issue for some voters.

- Phone bank was train the trainer. No documentation available for volunteers. IT techs onsite for duration of voting. Call agents no familiar with how to use the technology.

Suggestions to Improve Documentation & Training:

- Create better/detailed documentation for staff and train staff ahead of time on how all equipment works.
 - List all passwords in one document for IT Staff to access instead of asking as needed.
- Post a short video for Citizens on what to expect when they walk in to an Election Site on County's website as well.

Miscellaneous Feedback:

- Robyn getting loaner vehicles for staff was a great idea and should be considered next time as well.
- Separate Chat box for Judges to use will be helpful.

Remote Collections Issues:

Department for Information Technology was asked to support with Remote Collections as well. There were 4 sites selected for Remote collections. Jones Creek Ranch Park, Elections Warehouse, Precinct 2 Annex and Sienna Annex. Below is a list of issues faced by IT support staff while at Remote Collections sites:

- Communication to Judges was not clear. Judges had no idea that they were supposed to wait for IT staff to close and process Express Touch (Curb side voting) machines and judges had to sign-off this report.
 - Some of the Judges left equipment with R&B driver outside the facility and left.
 - R&B drivers were also not aware of this process.
 - At Precinct, support staff was told Judges did not had to sign any reports.
- At Jones Creek Ranch, there were 8-10 judges were waiting in line for support staff to process each Express Vote machine and upload results from DS200 and none of the Judges were happy that they were required to stay until process was finished for their location.
- Sienna Remote Collection support staff had issues uploading election results as Judges did not follow closing procedure correctly and did not close DS200 properly which gave an error message while trying to upload results.
- There were also too many previously unmentioned, last minute things (The checklist, the barrel key for docking station, the rolls of paper, changing paper rolls, the sign-off sheet etc.)

Suggestions to Improve Remote Collections Process:

- Communication can be improved by letting all Judges know of expectation when dropping off equipment including R&B driver(s) so everyone is on the same page.
- Possibly have 2 support staff from IT at each location with 2 sets of equipment (laptop, docking station for Express Touch) to process each express vote machine quicker and upload results quicker as well from DS200.
 - If support staff only has 1 set of equipment and it malfunction(s) then processing process will stop.
- Other suggestion is for Judges to drop off everything over at Rosenberg Annex (as always) and have more volunteer(s) at Annex to close and process results.

Support Tickets:

Information Technology department created support tickets to keep track of all reported issues during Early Voting (EV) period and for issues that were raised on Election Day (ED). There were total of 393 support tickets created during EV and ED. Note: due to the influx of issues encountered on Election Day some tickets were input on 11/4/2020.

Below is a summary of these tickets by different Issue Category:

Issue Category	Count
Additional Equipment Requests	25
ES&S Equipment Issues	125
Supplies Request	9
User Training	35
Votec Kiosk Issues	140
Votec Kiosk Issues – MiFi	43
Wait Time Reports	9
Logistics	7
Total Tickets	393

See ElectionSupportTickets.xlsx for descriptive listing of all tickets logged.

Phone Bank Stats:

The phone bank took 10456 calls 10/13/2020 – 10/30/2020. The average call was 2 minutes and 46 seconds long.

Early Voting Dates:		101320-103020												
Split/Skill:		Elections English/10												
Date	ACD Calls	Avg Speed Ans	Avg Aban Time	Avg ACD Time	Avg ACW Time	Aban Calls	Max Delay	Flow In	Flow Out	Extn Out Calls	Avg Extn Out Time	% ACD Time	% Ans Calls	
10/13/2020	1279	6:28	4:24	2:20	:09	575	21:42	147	147	509	:38	33.46	63.92	
10/14/2020	974	6:01	4:53	2:32	:09	317	25:00:00	106	106	300	:42	29.77	69.72	
10/15/2020	880	3:23	4:46	2:34	:08	137	22:00	76	76	310	:50	23.07	80.51	
10/16/2020	718	2:22	4:04	2:45	:08	117	17:43	46	46	276	:39	19.84	81.5	
10/17/2020	240	:09	:35	2:30	:09	5	3:31	28	28	152	:45	6.17	87.91	
10/18/2020	0					0	:00	0	0	16	:57	0		
10/19/2020	835	3:53	5:36	2:37	:09	140	26:10:00	61	61	237	:40	23.97	80.6	
10/20/2020	707	2:55	3:42	2:44	:08	105	16:13	52	52	251	:46	20.75	81.83	
10/21/2020	595	:47	1:56	2:44	:08	26	9:20	59	59	218	:30	17.75	87.5	
10/22/2020	568	:32	1:19	3:19	:08	10	9:19	48	48	212	:39	14.75	90.73	
10/23/2020	582	1:54	4:07	3:39	:08	48	25:05:00	25	26	225	1:00	14.85	88.72	
10/24/2020	190	:22	3:35	3:20	:08	6	15:36	20	20	118	:57	5.87	87.96	
10/25/2020	47	:07		2:56	:08	0	1:24	3	3	73	1:01	1.23	94	
10/26/2020	610	2:02	4:40	2:56	:08	51	20:04	39	39	196	:49	12.23	87.14	
10/27/2020	599	:37	1:16	2:51	:09	16	5:40	47	47	181	1:03	11.81	90.48	
10/28/2020	559	:52	2:39	2:48	:09	21	9:10	31	31	203	:50	11.36	91.49	
10/29/2020	524	1:21	2:24	3:02	:09	37	12:52	25	26	155	:38	10.99	89.27	
10/30/2020	549	2:29	4:37	2:48	:08	77	19:56	20	20	183	:40	10.53	84.98	
Totals	10456	2:54	4:24	2:46	:08	1688	26:10:00	833	835	3815	:45	14.56	80.56	

The phone bank took 1153 calls on 11/3/2020. The average call was 2 minutes and 25 seconds long. A total of 46 hours and 34 minutes was spent on calls on the phone bank.

Date:		11/3/2020												
Split/Skill:		Elections English/10												
Agent Name	ACD Calls	Avg ACD Time	Avg ACW Time	ACD Time	ACW Time	Agent Ring Time	Other Time	AUX Time	Avail Time	Staffed Time	Trans Out	Held Calls	Avg Hold Time	
Nguyen, Kim	4	:27	:08	:01:48	:00:32	:01:05	:17:33	18:51:00	4:48:02	24:00:00	11	13	:12	
Gonzalez, Rose	0			:00:00	:00:00	:00:00	:21:27	16:37:42	:44:23	17:43:32	16	21	:56	
Elections PB4	119	1:55	:08	3:48:07	:15:53	:09:21	:56:15	1:07:30	6:06:02	12:23:08	13	30	2:00	
Castillo, Matt	7	2:16	:07	:15:55	:00:55	:00:24	1:19:02	5:48:03	5:27:17	12:51:36	15	35	1:39	
Elections PB2	72	2:31	:08	3:00:51	:09:04	:04:42	:34:34	10:53:29	4:32:01	19:14:41	8	17	2:06	
Elections PB3	89	2:55	:08	4:19:29	:11:52	:06:53	1:00:14	:19:01	5:14:43	11:12:12	22	43	1:26	
McLoughlin, Debbie	6	:54	:08	:05:23	:00:48	:00:49	:50:00	9:11:36	3:56:50	14:05:26	9	17	:50	
Phone Bank 2	9	1:51	:08	:16:35	:01:12	:00:52	:48:18	9:45:07	4:04:24	14:56:28	11	16	:47	
Elections PB1	5	1:28	:08	:07:22	:00:40	:00:48	:36:24	17:07:08	1:22:58	19:15:20	10	11	:13	
Cantu, Cathy	6	1:21	:08	:08:03	:00:48	:00:44	:41:29	13:57:35	1:12:08	16:00:47	15	16	:17	
Gouldsmith, James	1	:13	:08	:00:13	:00:08	:00:16	:16:17	23:19:48	:23:18	24:00:00	3	5	1:14	
Elections PB6	39	2:23	:08	1:32:44	:05:04	:02:04	:23:00	15:23:09	1:42:19	19:08:20	9	14	1:43	
Elections PB7	27	2:36	:07	1:10:04	:03:20	:02:10	:10:30	16:15:15	1:33:26	19:14:45	7	9	1:36	
Elections PB8	52	2:23	:07	2:03:51	:06:24	:03:48	:39:17	:35:39	2:03:22	5:32:21	12	23	1:50	
Elections PB9	96	2:27	:08	3:55:44	:12:34	:05:59	1:09:57	1:51:12	12:02:44	19:18:10	18	45	1:55	
Elections PB10	97	2:45	:08	4:26:56	:12:44	:07:58	:49:47	8:21:08	5:15:35	19:14:08	9	41	1:15	
Elections PB11	0			:00:00	:00:00	:00:30	:00:00	:09:05	:05:54	:15:29	0	0		
Elections PB12	115	2:18	:08	4:24:44	:15:23	:05:13	1:06:27	:32:01	5:52:11	12:15:59	12	29	2:35	
Elections PB13	118	1:57	:08	3:49:45	:15:30	:07:37	:47:02	:47:07	6:29:10	12:16:11	12	29	1:38	
Elections PB14	89	3:16	:08	4:51:07	:11:38	:05:47	1:05:51	:52:23	5:09:23	12:16:09	13	31	2:12	
Elections PB15	115	2:04	:08	3:57:20	:15:01	:05:16	:20:31	1:08:15	6:18:34	12:04:57	17	24	:52	
Elections PB5	87	2:58	:08	4:18:38	:11:29	:08:36	:35:05	1:39:22	5:06:59	12:00:09	8	19	1:53	
Fernandez, Veronica	0			:00:00	:00:00	:00:00	:02:00	:23:19	:00:00	:25:19	1	1	:26	
Totals	1153	2:25	:08	46:34:39	2:30:59	1:20:52	14:51:00	174:55:54	89:31:43	329:45:07	251	489	1:31	

Elections Help Desk – calls into IT Service Desk for technical support. Voter Hotline A and B – DA Election hotline.

Date	Day	Elections Help Desk	Voter Hotline A	Voter Hotline B
10/6/2020	Tuesday		7	4
10/7/2020	Wednesday			
10/8/2020	Thursday			
10/9/2020	Friday		1	
10/10/2020	Saturday			
10/11/2020	Sunday			
10/12/2020	Monday			2
10/13/2020	Tuesday		6	9
10/14/2020	Wednesday		5	3
10/15/2020	Thursday		1	5
10/16/2020	Friday		3	3
10/17/2020	Saturday		1	5
10/18/2020	Sunday			2
10/19/2020	Monday	34		7
10/20/2020	Tuesday	18		10
10/21/2020	Wednesday	15		8
10/22/2020	Thursday	17	1	6
10/23/2020	Friday	11	1	1
10/24/2020	Saturday	16	4	5
10/25/2020	Sunday	4	1	5
10/26/2020	Monday	10	1	1
10/27/2020	Tuesday	9	1	3
10/28/2020	Wednesday	19		3
10/29/2020	Thursday	15		6
10/30/2020	Friday	9		7
10/31/2020	Saturday			
11/1/2020	Sunday			
11/2/2020	Monday			5
11/3/2020	Tuesday	8		18

FBC IT Recommendations:

Information Technology best practices includes the following recommendations:

- IT Project Management Office manages Elections project from intake to Go Live.
 - Extensive project plan outlining the project and goal.
 - Project Management is the discipline of initiating, planning and executing a project with the goal for a successful implementation.
 - The quality of the deliverable must be kept as high as possible, so the Project Manager must be constantly vigilant and review often so as not to allow it to slip.
 - Organization and communication are essential.
- Election technical support is solely provided and led by FBC IT.
- All equipment tested before Go Live. Vendor check JAR files prior to Election.
 - IT best practice is to perform quality assurance (testing) prior to Project Go Live.
 - Test software and equipment by running thousands of test voter data prior to the start of early voting.
- IT walkthrough of all polling locations, early voting and election day.
 - Some locations had wifi connectivity issues. Housing a polling site in a cement block room such as Bowie MS can cause wifi connectivity issues.
 - IT works with Facilities on all construction plans to ensure prime network connectivity.
- Multiple hands on training sessions for poll workers with IT personnel in attendance.
- Not recommended to introduce new equipment/software on a major election without testing in a previous election or having onsite technical support knowledgeable in resolving potential issues.
 - It is not best practice to introduce new technology during a major event.
 - IT works with FBC departments/offices to schedule an implementation that will have the least impact to the business.
- Some polling locations have historically bad wifi connection. Recommend identifying those areas and having a wifi boost in place prior to early voting.
- Live Help messages were sent to/from Elections Administration and poll workers. This caused outages and some polling locations. Recommend messages are sent via cell phone instead. Hotline can be utilized to send in requests for voter lookup, supplies or technology help. It is not best practice to utilize a messaging system that randomly causes outages.
- Bluetooth technology was used to connect laptop and tablet on kiosk. IT recommendation is to hardwire instead.
 - Using Bluetooth introduces risk of receiving interference from other mobile devices.
 - Common sources of interference can include power cables, microwave ovens, fluorescent lights, wireless video cameras, and cordless phones.
 - Connecting the kiosk devices via a cable reduces the risk of Bluetooth dropping off
- Upgrade poll worker cell phones from flip phones to more modern devices.
 - Negotiate with cell phone carrier on a more cost effective mobile plan to be used during elections.
- Do not update voter data during live voting.
 - It is not standard Information Technology best practice to update production data while users are on a system.

- Manual processes such as loading to Secretary of State should be re-evaluated.
 - If possible move to electronic upload.
 - If manually entering data, should have 2 step verification. Step 1: Staff member enters ballot numbers Step 2: After each entry a different Staff Member confirms that the data entered is correct.
- Documentation for all processes.
 - Training manuals
 - EA staff processes
- Wait time software should be utilized and automated.
- When updating data for polling sites IT recommends maintaining a checklist of those locations and marking off when a task has been performed for that location and especially when receiving files from each location.
- On the last day of early voting VOTEC sent a JAR file patch. It was deployed by EA staff to most polling locations. IT doesn't recommend deploying a patch without proper vetting and testing. Once confirmed that there are no issues IT's recommendation is to deploy to a location with multiple kiosks. Install the patch on one kiosk to ensure no issues before deploying to other machines. It is not standard or recommended to deploy an unknown patch without proper change management on a large project.
- Election Day was chaotic. I had almost 30 contractors that were not familiar with the equipment thrown into a new environment. It's not an ideal situation but I would do it again vs not having support. It was overwhelming to have so many issues that shouldn't have occurred. Having documentation and extensive training as well as working equipment would have helped tremendously.
- Poll workers at a few locations on Election Day ran out of paper to print their end of day report. Fully stock each location with supplies.
- Communicate with poll workers that IT staff will be onsite.
- Order more equipment such as kiosks. Better to have too much than not enough.
- Fully integrated system
 - Two different vendors (ES&S and VOTEC) were utilizing the same hardware and mixed with the election equipment. Initially it was difficult identifying the source of failure. More training would help. IT recommends identifying if there are more all-in-one systems available.

Conclusion:

Overall, Information Technology did an excellent job supporting all the Early Voting and Election Day sites and hope that for future elections, planning, communication and training would be improved so we can better serve the Citizens of Fort Bend County.