



June 13, 2012

Jennifer Collins, Research Analyst
Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors
901 N. 9th Street, Room 201
Milwaukee, WI 53233

Dear Ms. Collins:

Herein, please find my concerns relative to the ballot printer problems the City of Greenfield experienced with regard to the February 21, 2012 and April 3, 2012 elections. I am submitting this letter to be entered into the record at the Committee of Judiciary, Safety and General Services meeting on Thursday, June 14, 2012.

It is important to mention the problems Milwaukee County municipalities encountered at the outset with the new ballot printer, Burton & Mayer, in February 2012. The ballot printer was having trouble with the layout of the February ballots. Ballots were expected by the statutory date of Tuesday, January 31, 2012. The City of Greenfield received paper pdf ballots at 5:46 p.m. on Wednesday, February 1, 2012, and official ballots on Friday, February 10, 2012, with the election being just 11 days away and scheduled for February 21, 2012. The lateness of the official ballots left one week for in-office absentee voting. The Government Accountability Board certified the election on February 1, 2012, and ballots could then be printed and distributed. Where were our ballots during the nine days following certification, from February 1, 2012 through February 10, 2012?

Unfortunately the problems the ballot printer had in February 2012 were not rectified for the April 2012 election, and so Milwaukee County municipalities had to go through the same problems all over again for the April election. April ballots were supposed to have been available to mail on Tuesday, March 13, 2012. Despite delays and ballot printer problems (faulty ballots) we did not receive our pdf paper ballots for mailing to absentee voters until Monday, March 19, 2012 at 4:02 p.m., which was six days later than statutorily required. We received our official ballots on Friday, March 23 at 12:15 p.m., which was 10 days late and after the statutorily required deadline. Again, that left only one full week of in-office absentee voting, as opposed to two.

What are the repercussions of late official ballots and ballot problems?

1. Delays in receiving voting machine media and limited testing time.

Our Clerk's office had only one week to test 27 voting machines. This is not much time to test, and we had to call in a temporary staff member to assist with testing in order to get the job done. This was an added cost to our municipality in the approximate amount of \$282.20. Also keep in mind, the purpose of testing machines is to ensure there aren't any problems with programming or counting of ballots. Fortunately we didn't have any programming errors, which would have required us return the media for reprogramming and caused further testing delays.

This issue is compounded by the fact that delays in testing also hinder packing polling place supplies for 21 wards. Machine keys cannot be issued until machines are tested, security seals installed on the machines and documented on various forms. Thus, these delays affect other election tasks we should be performing during the last week prior to an election.

2. Managing a preventable situation.

I had to stop what I was doing and figure out what I was going to do to manage the faulty/late ballot problem, taking me away from other important responsibilities and tasks I should have been focusing on the last few weeks prior to an election.

3. Cancel and rescheduled absentee voting at nursing homes and care facilities that have absentee voting with Special Voting Deputies.

Voting with nursing homes had to be cancelled and rescheduled in February and in March because we did not have our ballots in a timely manner. Voting with nursing homes statutorily could begin on January 30, 2012 for the February election, and on March 12, 2012 for the April election. As a result voting was not conducted at these facilities until after February 10, 2012 for the February election and after March 19, 2012 for the April election.

We have seven nursing home/care facilities, with approximately 350 voters. As a result of the ballot problems, our Special Voting Deputies had to reschedule new voting times with residents at seven different locations. Voting times are typically scheduled at least one month in advance. Thus, voters had to plan according to the change if they wanted to vote, Special Voting Deputies had to rearrange their own work schedules to accommodate the voters at these locations, and the staff at these facilities that assist the Special Voting Deputies with the process also had to change their schedules.

In addition, the delay in receiving the ballots reduces the amount of time for voting with electors at the nursing home/care facilities. If voters are not available to vote, the law requires the Special Voting Deputies to make second attempts to meet the elector to vote. If a second attempt is made and the voter is still not available, the ballot has to be mailed. My concern is the later voting starts at these facilities, there is less follow-up time with them for voting. Due to the delay prior to the April election, and follow-up needed, I had to hire and train two additional Special Voting Deputies to assist with

nursing home /care facility voting in order to accomplish voting within the short time span to meet statutory requirements.

4. Voters were required to vote on “paper” ballots.

In February when voters came to the Clerk’s office to absentee vote we would tell them they could vote a paper pdf ballot that would be hand counted on Election Day, or they could return to the Clerk’s office to vote an “official ballot” that could be processed through the machine when we received our official ballots. Most chose to return at a later date to vote the “official ballot” that could be processed through the machine. This was not an option in April, as all absentee voting was conducted using paper pdf ballots.

5. Mailing ballots to military, overseas and out-of-state absentee voters timely is critical.

Since paper pdf ballots were not available for mailing to voters with absentee requests on file until Monday, March 19, 2012 at 4:02 p.m., which was six days later than statutorily required, we sent ballots to our military, overseas, and out-of-state absentee voters via FedEx, so as not to disenfranchise voters who should have had their ballots mailed six days earlier. April ballots were supposed to have been available to mail on Tuesday, March 13, 2012. As a result, we incurred additional expenses in the amount of \$849.95, so that our voters would have better changes of receiving their absentee ballots timely to cast their ballots and have their votes counted.

6. Training time spent with poll workers discussing the process to remake ballots.

The City Clerk developed step-by-step instructions for poll workers to follow to make the remaking/duplicating absentee ballot process as simple and error-proof as possible. Poll workers were trained specifically on this matter for approximately one-half hour at their meeting the Thursday before the election, as the ballot reconstruction team would not possibly be able to assist all 21 wards with remaking/duplicating their absentee ballots. Thus, all poll workers had to be trained. The details involved in counting and documenting paper ballots is time-consuming and labor-intensive. There is a potential for errors to be made, as this is an ancillary process that would not be necessary in the event ballots did not have to be remade/duplicated.

7. Remaking/duplicating paper ballots at the polls on Election Day.

As a result of the faulty ballots, we had to send out paper ballots to all of our absentee voters. Absentee voters voting in-person in the Clerk’s office could not vote on “official ballots” when we received them because the ballot printer did not have time to “score” them, so they could not be folded and could only be used at the polls on Election Day. As a result, absentee voters continued to be offered paper ballots. Also, all voters who vote by Special Voting Deputy had to vote on paper ballots.

The faulty ballots resulted in approximately 843 absentee ballots that had to be remade at the polls on Election Day. Although this may seem like a simple solution, it is quite an undertaking for municipalities with large numbers of absentee ballots. A “ballot reconstruction team” was hired and trained to assist wards that had high numbers of absentee ballots to remake. Remaking/duplicating ballots is a very

time-consuming and tedious process, and we discovered that it takes approximately two and a half hours to remake approximately 300 ballots. Thus, our ballot reconstruction team worked for seven hours to assist some of our 21 wards with this process, at a cost of \$161.

In closing, I request that safeguards be put into place so this situation is can be prevented from happening in the future. The ballot printer's problems need to be resolved immediately so clerks get their official ballots on time in the future. In addition, the correct number of ballots for each ward needs to be sent by the ballot printer to the election media programmers on the first attempt to avoid further delays. It is important that there is open and sufficient communication with the clerks with regard to the status of these matters going forward for planning and managing purposes. I hope I have provided you with a better understanding of the unnecessary and compounding effects delayed ballots have on municipalities and their voters. I will be requesting reimbursement in the amount of \$1,293.15 from Burton & Mayer, Inc., the ballot printer, for reimbursement of the costs incurred and explained herein due to delayed and faulty ballots, which should not have to be paid by the taxpayers of Greenfield.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Goergen
City Clerk

cc: Mayor Michael Neitzke
Monica Schultz, MMCA President