



MILWAUKEE COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS

*George L. Christenson, County Clerk
Julietta Henry, Director*

Commissioners
*Timothy Posnanski, Chair
Dawn Martin
Helmut Fritz*

MEMORANDUM

Date: April 22, 2022

From: Elections Director Julietta Henry

To: Marcelia Nicholson, Chairwoman, Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors

Subject: Requested informational report providing overview of the Milwaukee County Election Commission

File Type: Informational Report

REQUEST

County Board Chairwoman Marcelia Nicholson requested a separate informational report that includes information about the specific functions of the Milwaukee County Election Commission. Chairwoman Nicholson hopes this request will empower district offices with resources and information that allows elected officials to best serve their constituents.

REQUESTED INFORMATION

The mission of the Milwaukee County Election Commission is to administer federal, state, and local elections in a manner that fosters public trust in the accuracy, efficiency, and fairness of elections and develops public confidence in the democratic process. Milwaukee County is the only county in Wisconsin with a dedicated Board of Election Commissioners and separate department (Election Commission, Org Unit 3010) dedicated to elections in the State of Wisconsin.

The Milwaukee County Board of Election Commissioners is made up of three individuals appointed by the County Executive. The current Commissioners are Chair Timothy Posnanski, Vice-Chair Dawn Martin, and Commissioner Helmut Fritz. Two Commissioners represent the party of the current governor and the third Commissioner represent the opposing party. The primary role of the Board of Commissioners is to certify election results and to act in the capacity of the governing body during canvass and recount proceedings.

The County Clerk, George Christenson serves as the Executive Director of the Election Commission. Julietta Henry was appointed by the Board of Election Commissioners to serve as the Elections Director of the Milwaukee County Election Commission. The Election Commission is also staffed by Deputy Elections Director Michelle Hawley, Elections Services Coordinator, Niko Owens, and Part-time Administrative Assistant Karen Robinson. There are nine seasonal employees that aid the commission during the election cycles by assisting with the county canvass and the review of nomination papers.

The Milwaukee County Election Commission maintains cooperative working relationships with state election administrators, municipal election officials, and school district clerks to administer elections effectively and efficiently in Milwaukee County. The agency oversees the election process throughout all 19 municipalities and school districts within Milwaukee County.

The Milwaukee County Election Commission serves as a resource to commissioners, municipal election officials, school district clerks, candidates for public office, constituents, and the general public in accordance with Wisconsin Statutes and Administrative Rules. The office of the Election Commission prepares and coordinates proper publication of election notices; designs, proofreads, and orders ballots; and coordinates delivery of ballots and election supplies to each Milwaukee County municipality.

The Election Commission staff programs voting equipment and electronic media used for the DS200 Voting Machines and ExpressVote machines. Staff also works collaboratively with municipal election officials to conduct and validate pre-election voting equipment testing. On Election Day, staff support local municipal election officials by answering election related questions and troubleshooting technical or voting equipment questions. Unofficial countywide election results are collected on the night of each election and publicly posted and disseminated. The County Board of Election Commissioners comes together as the Board of Canvassers to verify, validate, and certify election results. In conjunction with the canvass, a voluntary, independent voting equipment audit is also conducted. Additionally, the Milwaukee County Election Commission oversees records retention; stores, maintains, and schedules destruction of countywide election related materials (ballots, absentee envelopes, inspector statements, poll books, etc.) in accordance with records retention laws.

In conjunction with overseeing the overall administration of elections, the Milwaukee County Election Commission accepts, reviews, and certifies Candidates' Nomination Papers and related ballot access documents; reviews challenges filed against candidates and prepares written reports; and coordinates related hearings. The Commission manages the logistics and activities for countywide recounts and recall elections.

Last, but certainly not least, the Election Commission receives, audits, and maintains Campaign Finance Records for registered county candidate and elected officials; provides documentation and procedural guidance to interested parties seeking election in Milwaukee County; fulfills open records requests; answers constituents' election related questions, concerns, or complaints; and conducts, organizes, and promotes voter education.

FISCAL EFFECT

This report is informational only and has no fiscal effect

VIRTUAL MEETING INVITES

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PREPARED BY:

Julietta Henry, Milwaukee County Elections Director

Michelle R. Hawley, Milwaukee County Deputy Elections Director

APPROVED BY:

George L. Christenson, Milwaukee County Clerk

ATTACHMENTS:

PowerPoint Presentation-Milwaukee County Election Commission