

MEETING: BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS SPECIAL MEETING - VOTING EQUIPMENT MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER: June 24, 2002, at 9:37 a.m. in the McEaddy Conference Room, 12th floor, Palm Beach County Governmental Center, West Palm Beach, Florida.

I.A. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS AND OFFICERS PRESENT:

Chair Warren H. Newell
Vice-Chair Carol A. Roberts
Commissioner Burt Aaronson
Commissioner Addie L. Greene - Absent
Commissioner Mary McCarty - Absent
Commissioner Karen T. Marcus
Commissioner Tony Masilotti
County Administrator Robert Weisman
County Attorney Denise Dytrych
Supervisor of Elections Theresa LePore
Recording Clerk Donna Atwood
Condensing Clerk Denise Carmona

I.B. INTRODUCTIONS

Commissioner Newell welcomed those assembled.

Theresa LePore, Supervisor of Elections, introduced Paul Terwilliger, Sequoia Voting Systems system designer, who was in attendance via speakerphone.

All others in attendance introduced themselves.

II. See page 2.

**III. UPDATES/STATUS REPORT OF MOCK ELECTION
THERESA LEPORE, SUPERVISOR OF ELECTIONS**

Supervisor of Elections LePore discussed the status of the new voting equipment. She said the mock election was scheduled for July 13, 2002, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., and would allow the public to try out the new touch screen voting machines in various locations around the county.

Ms. LePore reported that staff's new, improved, more extensive training was almost complete. Commissioner Masilotti complimented Ms. LePore on her progress and said the board was ready to offer any assistance she needed.

Commissioner Marcus suggested utilizing county employees to supplement the shortage of poll workers, and Commissioner Aaronson suggested college students. Ms. LePore responded that some college students were not registered voters and that they have other jobs. She said she anticipated hiring from the public.

**II. REPORT ON ELECTION EQUIPMENT CERTIFICATION PROCESS
PAUL W. CRAFT, CHIEF OF VOTING SYSTEMS CERTIFICATION,
STATE OF FLORIDA DIVISION OF ELECTIONS**

Chief Craft performed a demonstration on one of the new touch screen voting machines that would be used for the mock elections. Supervisor of Elections LePore said 50 machines would be available for testing in various locations around the county, and some locations would have two voting machines.

Mr. Craft communicated that in 1990, Florida had a major election reform act to improve and certify voting systems used in elections. He said his division was recognized nationally as the best testing operation in the country.

Commissioner Newell suggested that during the mock elections, laptop computers be made available so that verification of voters' registration could be done quickly and easily. Ms. LePore responded that every precinct had laptops, which would allow communication to the main office during elections and that the county had purchased 150 cell phones for use as backup to verify provisional ballots.

Commissioner Aaronson emphasized that he would prefer the new machines be tested in a mock election in county buildings. Commissioner Masilotti agreed and added that it would provide a more controlled environment. Commissioner Newell recommended that absentee and provisional ballots be tested on the new machines because that would allow for a variety of interactions and more realistic results.

IV. DISCUSSION/QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD

Chief Craft stated that during the certification process, the voting machines hardware was tested, the source codes were reviewed, and a functional simulation election was done. He added that the analysts would be able to determine that the proper voting procedures had been correctly followed. Supervisor of Elections LePore reported that recounts were done in her office and the new machines gave the voter a "thank you for voting" response when his or her vote was accepted. Furthermore, she assured the board that prior to every election night, every piece of equipment was tested.

In response to Commissioner Newell, Mr. Craft said there were 192,000 votes tested system wide. Ms. LePore stated that 3,800 machines were tested effectively and that if one were to break down during an election, it would be replaced. Mr. Craft told Commissioner Newell that a year 2000 legislative requirement was to develop a new fail-safe system.

The new machines, Mr. Craft explained, were equipped with an audio ballot for the visually handicapped. He said that when the ballot card was inserted in the machine, the system was activated and could not be removed until a vote was made. Polling workers were taught to do manual overrides, said Ms. LePore, if a card activator failed.

Ms. LePore agreed with Commissioner Marcus that voter education was critical. Consequently, tri-fold mailers with the new voting instructions were being sent out, she said.

IV. DISCUSSION/QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD - CONTINUED

Commissioner Roberts summarized by saying that in the 2000 election, while the world's eyes were focused on Palm Beach County, the county was seen as democracy in action, and the county learned how important every vote was. Commissioner Masilotti concurred by saying the county had done everything humanly possible to ensure an error-free election.

V. ADJOURNMENT

The chair declared the meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

ATTESTED:

APPROVED:

Clerk

Chair