

January 12, 2016 Hartford County ROVAC Minutes

Guest Speakers: Ted Bromley & other SOTS Staff to discuss Election Management System

Chairperson Darlene Burrell called the meeting to order at 9:30 am. There will be a special joint county presentation with Hartford, Middlesex and Tolland at 10:30 am on the new Election Night Reporting System. Attendees were asked to sign in, we had 168 people rsvp.

Secretary's Report by Laura Wolfe. The March minutes were sent to the membership. Marie noted some spelling errors. Marie Fox made a motion to accept, Sharon Krawiecki seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The June minutes were sent to the membership. Linda Cultrera's name was incorrectly spelled. No other corrections. Marie Fox made a motion to accept, Sharon Krawiecki seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Darlene mentioned that these minutes have detailed question/answers from Ted Bromley and Peggy Reeves on the canvass and ERIC which will be very useful during this year's spring canvass.

Convention Committee Report by Ann Clark. No details yet, but we do have the dates of the Spring Convention, it will be April 13, 14 and 15 in Cromwell. The Fall Convention will be in Southbury, but no date is set yet.

Education Committee Report by Sharon Krawiecki. Katie Blinstrubas of Prospect is new chair. Met last week to discuss ideas and there are six more meetings scheduled. Will hear what the SOTS plans to do, and then build around that. There was discussion with the moderator trainers on including a recertification class for Registrars. There will be no evening banquet. There will be a larger lunch with a guest speaker. Anticipated is a ROVAC classes day, then the annual ROVAC meeting and an SOTS classes day.

Legislative Committee Report by Sue Larson, Lizbeth Becker and Peter Gostin. The committee is planning on proposing EDR end at 7:00 pm; repealing the mandatory Saturday session; eliminating the two tier reporting system we currently have, which treats state and municipal elections differently. Also propose changes to solve the unknown voter issue, change the scanner's programming so that it would reject double votes to a candidate, as it currently does to overvotes. Absentee ballots would still be a hand count. The other option would be to change unknown to unassigned and leave those votes as that.

Q. Since Election Night Reporting will automatically count and transfer the votes for us, is this still an issue?

A. Yes. In essence what we currently do is randomly calculate which party to assign the vote to. We need to establish the voter's intent, as we do with every other vote.

We have been discussing with SOTS how to establish the difference between what the statute reads and what their interpretation of how to apply the law is, to make it clearer. Specifically, the number of signatures required to petition, needs to be clearly established. When petition pages are currently issued, Registrars enter a number of signatures required based on 5% of the major party's registry on the date of issue. However, SOTS has interpreted the required

number needed to be based on the registry totals when the petitions are due. So if during the petitioning process a significant number of new registrations occur, as they did this year, the petitioners will not know definitively how many signatures are required, and presume the number required on the date of issue is correct. This needs to be clarified. If the numbers are allowed to shift, that changes the number of signatures required.

Q. Just to clarify, when you issue petition papers, the number of signatures required is established on the original paperwork you give the petitioner?

A. Yes, but the problem is when the registry shifts because the current interpretation is to use 5 % of the current registration numbers, not the date of issue. This is unfair to the candidates who collected what they were told was required, and then had their petition papers rejected based on different numbers.

We are also asking the SOTS to establish an online index of additional answers and directives that they have. If you have any questions, you can always check this frequently asked questions resource.

We have also discussed with SOTS how to handle the remedy for the Spanish translation issues that have come up. There was a confusing situation where the Spanish translation was argued to not be equal to the English translation on the ballot.

We have requested that the audit selection be done earlier. Once the SOTS has established which towns are going through recounts, they can pull those towns out, and hold the lottery earlier. This will be much better, especially given the very tight timeframe with the Thanksgiving holiday, when it is much harder to find poll workers to help. This will also allow towns to unlock memory cards and put away their election materials earlier if they are not chosen for the lottery.

We also have requested that ROVAC members will be included in any discussions of new technologies such as with the disenfranchised voters. (eg new handicap accessible equipment.)

Q. This seems like a lot for a short legislative session, do you have time for all of this?

A. Those last issues are discussions with SOTS, before we consider legislative actions. We are trying to go through the Secretary, rather than around her.

Q. For the Presidential Primary coming up, has SOTS reconciled the online registration deadline? Is it 14 days before, or 7, or 5? With all of the party enrollment changes this is going to be an important deadline.

A. This is unclear, and a very good question to ask their staff today.

One more note, regarding online registration. Make sure your town website has a link to the SOTS online registration site. Check your town's website, you need to have them on both your Town Clerk and Registrar web pages. There is going to be a letter sent to CCM of any towns

that do not have the links up and working. The Town Clerks and the Registrars both need to have this - CCM has us linked together.

Q. Given how difficult it will be to implement EDR in a Presidential Election year, why does the SOTS object to changing the deadline to 7:00 pm? What is her reasoning?

A. The Secretary wants no changes to EDR this year, period. End of subject, that is their position.

Technology Committee by Ann Kilby. No report, we have not met since our last county meeting. There is no status, I have asked Matt Waggnar for an update on the electronic pollbooks, but I have not heard from him. No date for a next meeting.

Q. The red A for marking absentee ballots in CVRS has shifted as we (Hartford County) had requested, and Mike Wyman of Tolland noted that he has a problem with it and now it is back to it's old location. What is the status of this, will it move again before the election?

A. We will look at that again in February.

Q. In the change detail report in CVRS, we had asked about including status reason for change. Currently all other changes - address, name, party, etc. show what was changed, if the status was inactive, this used to be shown.

A. We will look into that too.

Ways and Means Committee - No Report. \$6 per town will be collected for the raffle at our next county meeting.

Handbook Committee by Darlene Burrell. Updates were made and latest copy of the Handbook has been sent out to all Hartford County members and to the other County chairs. An outline of what changes were made was sent out.

Q. In an old email from Ted, it was stated that if you choose to put in a primary, it will get printed on all of the letters. Is that still true?

A. No, the letters will only tell party members about the primary.

Three new Registrars and two new Deputy Registrars were welcomed: Glastonbury Registrar Zelda Lessne has resigned - New ROV Charlie Murray and Deputy Joan Halberg, Granby Registrar Sarah Thrall has resigned - New ROV Paul Willis and West Hartford Registrar Carolyn Thornberry has resigned - New ROV Alice Weibel and Deputy Elizabeth Sweeney.

Old Business: Moderator Training as of January 1st has gone to \$40 per student and this may increase as of July 1st, 2016. Karen has been sending out the dates. Please be sure to sign up as early as possible - as the trainers need to prepare for the primary too.

Q. I have a concern about the increase for July, as our fiscal budget is already set.

A. The trainers wanted to increase the fee to \$60 to cover their costs: preparation, materials, travel - often over 2 hours, plus the class time. The SOTS felt that was too

high. It is possible that the fee will stay at \$40, but this is not settled. Please contact Ted or Peggy if you are interested in becoming a Moderator Trainer.

The annual Canvass of voters began on January 4th, but make sure that you do not send any canvass CVR notices before Primary Day - April 26th. They must be sent between April 26th and May 1st. You can prepare all of your canvass letters now and you can send the ED-683 letters now. Remember to include the ERIC lists in your canvass of voters. Also note there is an exception, should the post office return acceptance letters, then a CVR letter can be sent in immediate response. You will only have a week to mail the canvass CVR letters, after the primary, so you will want to have them ready for mailing.

Q. Has Lorton Data received the information from CVRS for this year's canvass?

A. I spoke to Lorton and then contacted Steve Mason to send that to them, so they should be all set soon. Some towns may prefer to wait, and have the most recent data for their canvass, but you can start now.

Q. What determines the start date of the canvass and when does the 30 days apply?

A. The date you put into the CVRS system as your start date works as a reference point for reports, so you can use now, or the day you actually start. When you are entering the canvass information in the CVRS system it will automatically default to print today's date, but you can change that. Once you enter a different mailing date, the letters will print with that date. Be sure to check the dates as you create the letters. The 30 days refers to actual date when the CVR canvass letters are mailed, so you need to make sure that the date that CVRS uses on the preprinted letters matches your planned mailing date. Most towns will not want to have to enter and print the canvass letters on the day after the primary it takes time to get all of these letters out. Small towns might be able to do that, but larger towns will struggle with that.

Q. When will we be getting the ERIC spreadsheets that need to be included in the canvass?

A. We hope to have the information out in February. You can send friendly letters after the canvass period is over to those on the ERIC list. Whether you use Lorton Data or ROAST, you will need to check for duplications in these lists.

Q. Is ROAST still an option? We haven't heard from them yet.

A. Yes it is, they are still up and running. I just heard from them, but they are presuming that most of you will want to delay the start of your canvass, since you can't mail the CVR letters now. You need to contact them if you want to start now. They did not have the CVRS information when I last communicated with them, but will soon. The canvass can begin after January 4th, but mailing CVR letters are limited to April 26 to May 1st.

In January, Registrars need to mail letters to those on the permanent absentee list to confirm that they still wish to receive absentee ballots. A copy of the notice was sent out to all of Hartford County and to the other County chairs. You can use that notice, just fill in the blank spaces, as needed, with names and dates.

Party Transfer deadline is January 26th for the Presidential Preference Primary, so it is a good idea to remind the public that if they wish to make a party change that is the deadline. This is not mandatory, but it is a suggestion.

There is a mandatory session required for all Registrar offices on January 27th from 1:00 to 4:00 pm to receive primary petition pages for Town Committee. It is required for all Registrars or their designee to have their office open, regardless of whether petition pages have been issued.

The Presidential Preference Primary candidates whom have secured a spot on the April primary ballot will be announced by the Secretary of State on February 16th at 10:00 am.

Town Committee primaries will be held on March 1st for those town that need to hold one.

There is another mandatory session on March 4th from 1:00 to 4:00 pm to receive primary petition pages for the Presidential Preference primary. It is required for all Registrars or their designee to have their office open, regardless of whether petition pages have been issued.

Our next county meetings will be Tuesday, March 8th and Tuesday, June 14th, both will be at 9:30 am at Newington Town Hall.

Motion to adjourn at 10:15 am made by Sharon Krawiecki. Seconded by Marie Fox. Motion passed unanimously.

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Election Management System - Election Night Reporting - Special Meeting

Darlene Burrell asked that all participants sign in using the by county sheets provided, so that this training session information can be sent to SOTS. She noted that 168 people who reserved spaces are listed by county, but there is still additional room - please use the spaces provided at the end of the signup sheets. The powerpoint presentation should be available on the SOTS website, a general summary was included by Darlene on the back of the county meeting agenda that was sent out.

Special notes/common questions:

This new system does not attempt to replicate 169 towns special spreadsheet functions. It is designed to collect the data required by SOTS. You can continue to use your own spreadsheets if there is additional information that your town wishes to create/collect.

This is a demonstration of the highlights of this system. Module for the Town Clerks lets them set up local elections, prepare offices, file nominees. There will be single data entry points, information is entered once, then saved, for use in multiple reports, and for multiple years. Many of the required reports can be filed electronically and saved locally. Contact information

and email addresses can be stored. The information entered will transfer into ballots, spreadsheets, etc. Party rankings can be entered for your town or for each district, as necessary. This will allow you to create your grid for the printer. Reports are created and filed electronically, except for the affidavits, which still require signatures. They can be generated as an excel file, a pdf or csv report. The inventory report is optional, but is available to keep track of useful information for each polling site.

The module for the Registrars allows them to see the reports done by the Town Clerk, set up moderators, head moderators and polling place and district information. You also will need to associate the polling place with the appropriate offices and moderators and head moderator. The module for the Head Moderators and Moderators will allow them to enter the data for a specific event that they have been assigned. Unique user names and passwords are required by all moderators and head moderators. The system is designed so that you will not have to do any math, each piece of raw data is entered once. For the Certification of Ballot Order, the historical information with voting statistics of similar past elections is not currently going to prepopulate, but in the next version we would like to add this feature. On the dashboard you will be able to see which reports have been submitted successfully to the SOTS.

On election day, you can generate a pdf paper template to give your moderators of what data will need to be typed in and sent. The data entry will be exactly as it will appear on the tape from the optical scanner. On Election night, the head moderator will do the actual submission of data to the SOTS for approval and it will time and date stamped. Should an amendment be needed, they are numbered. It is also time and date stamped, eliminating any confusion about which return is the most recent. You can freely amend on Election Night as many times as you need, and the system will track this information. After the cutoff point, not sure exactly how much time, when we need to total the statewide results for the SOTS, each further amendment will need approval to be entered/created.

The first time we tried to launch this system we tried to replicate the complicated 10 page moderator return and it was a disaster. We have created a new system that is simple and works as a tally sheet by district. You enter machine totals, absentee totals and hand counts by district. More than one person can be entering data for an Election at the same time, as long as they are entering different tally sheets = districts of the return. No more widgeit, the unknown will be calculated and assigned for you. You can, as you enter, click the preview button to see how the votes will be assigned. All of this information is carried over, so nothing needs to be reentered. You can save your data, you can submit partial results, or you can wait for all of your data at the same time. You can submit the partial vote totals (machine) results on Election night, and can submit the stats (hand counts, etc.) separately later.

To see district grand totals, as opposed to cross endorsement separate tallies, you can generate a report with that information. To make it easier, you will get this same tally sheet for municipal years too, as the old format was difficult to use. So even though you have only entered the information once, you can generate the district totals, moderator report, head moderator report and Town Clerk reports will all MATCH. No more looking at the different

reports and trying to figure out why they don't correlate. Now that the widget calculation is done for you locally, there won't be any discrepancies with rounding the numbers to assign the unknown votes in to the different reports.

For towns that are in different Congressional Districts, the system can calculate the different reports required for that situation. From the administration side at the SOTS, approvals will need to be granted to accept returns, amendments, allow changes, approve passwords etc. Should they be needed, the SOTS can now generate any of the town/district reports created.

From the public side, you can watch results as they are submitted. The public can look at summary tabs for statewide results for the top offices. Running totals, turnout stats, all of the data keeps refreshing, as more results come in. Specific towns, districts and reports can be downloaded in different formats. The public can choose which races they wish to follow. The press no longer needs to call your office or the SOTS to get the latest results. The huge improvement is that there is no danger of mistakes during transferal of the data that occurred in the past from tape, to spreadsheet, to moderator report to head moderator report to Town Clerk report to SOTS certification.

Messaging is an option with this system. It will use the email addresses and cell phone numbers you entered for your poll workers. Special messages can be texted and emailed, like a court order to keep the polls open, can be sent to all of your staff. Scrolling messages, with for example urgent weather information, can appear on the dashboard. There is also a latest news section where more information can be posted. We also have active links that can also be changed.

- Q. Is there a test version so that we can show our town committees and the public?
- A. Not right now, we are still working on the program. But there is a test platform, it is what we are seeing right now.
- Q. Is the publicly accessible information printable?
- A. Yes, it is downloadable and printable.
- Q. How is the Moderator Report filed electronically?
- A. Once you have generated the report and sent it to the SOTS then we can open it and have the file. This is the same as the faxes that you sent, that we converted into a file.
- Q. What is the roll out plan?
- A. We are trying to make sure that it works, works well and it won't embarrass anyone. We are hoping that a lot of towns will be willing to use it in April for the Presidential Preference Primary. We are working on training opportunities so we are working on that right now. We need to provide actual training with data entry. For this primary, much of the work will be done by us, as the ballot is the same for everyone. You will need to set up your polling places, moderators and enter the data.

- Q. What happens with the reports that require signatures?
- A. Only one requires signature right now, that is the Absentee Ballot Affidavit report. You will check a box as you submit that you are certifying the report.
- Q. For the spreadsheet reports, are there column heading that will appear on every page?
- A. Yes, this works like a regular spreadsheet.
- Q. How will you choose which towns will be selected to use this in April?
- A. Ideally all 169 towns can try it, just let us know if you would like to use it.
- Q. What type of equipment to towns need to have to use this?
- A. The only thing you need is internet access. Any plain old laptop, that everybody has, internet based website. If you can get to Google, you can get to this.
- Q. What happens when multiple users are entering information?
- A. Yes, you can have multiple users log in and work at the same time. They can work on the same return; the only limitation is that they can't work on the same tally sheet for a district or precinct at the same time. You can have more than one event on the same day, and they will be treated separately - as you will for the Presidential primary.
- Q. We have a budget referendum on the same day as the primary, can we use it for both?
- A. Yes, technically, you can use it for both. It would be a separate event; the question would not be part of your primary ballots.
- Q. Dual reporting starts this year, how will this work with Election Night Reporting, as we will need to get the machine totals to you immediately? Will we need to buy separate programming for EDR ballots, so that the machine tapes will show those results separately?
- A. With this system you can submit your machine totals immediately even if your absentee, or hand counts or EDR numbers are blank. You can piecemeal your vote totals within each district. You can submit partial returns. You can continue to hand count your EDR votes, they are in a separate column.
- Q. How do we let you know we would like to participate this April in Election Night Reporting?
- A. You can contact Shirley Surgeon or Kevin or Ted, any one of us, and we will put you on our list.
- Q. When you do piecemeal reporting will it be clear that it is not the total vote?
- A. Yes, on the public side there will be a banner that let's everyone know if the results are unofficial partial totals or official results. The public does not see the break out of the stats, so it will not look messy to the public.
- Q. What are the complexities required for passwords that we need to create?
- A. Each password will need to contain at least one upper case, one lower case and one character. The passwords will expire in 90 days, and then you will need to renew them.

Q. Is it clear which reports are submitted by Town Clerks and which are submitted by Registrars?

A. Yes, most are done by the Town Clerk, the Registrars need to do a few.

Q. What does it mean to have the election certified?

A. In a state/federal year the SOTS has the ability to flip it from unofficial to official.

Q. Why can't we use electronic signatures for the Moderator Return?

A. Statute requires both an electronic file and a mailed, signed hard copy.

Q. How long will we be able to access the results of an election?

A. We have the ability to archive, so we can potentially keep it forever. So Town Committees will have the ability to check on previous election results themselves.

Q. How are you going to be able to do all of the training required for all of these pollworkers and towns?

A. We are going to do Regional trainings at places that have computers with access to the internet. We plan to do hands on training. Community colleges might be used.

Q. Where do we stand on getting the tabulators hooked up, so that you get the results directly?

A. That is a totally different thing. No plan to implement that this year.