



Department of Revenue  
**Office of the City Clerk**

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July 5, 2006

To: All Alders

Fr: Maribeth Witzel-Behl, City Clerk's Office

Re: Election Aide Resolution (File ID 04011)

Mayor Cieslewicz has graciously agreed to include Resolution 04011 on the July 11, 2006, Common Council agenda. This resolution would use salary savings in the City Clerk's Office for the hiring of six hourly Election Aide employees for the September and November Elections. Because I will be attending the Municipal Clerks Institute at UW-Green Bay when you vote on this resolution, I wanted to give you some background information on the resolution while I am still in Madison to answer any questions you may have.

As you know, the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) required states to implement statewide voter registration systems. Dane County was the first county to go "live" with Wisconsin's Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS) last October. All Wisconsin municipalities will be using the system by September.

The Madison City Clerk's Office is facing two major obstacles with SVRS: response time and the inability to process absentee ballot requests.

Using Madison's old voter registration system (Revote), a clerk could process a voter registration application and issue an absentee ballot in less than one minute. With SVRS it takes 3-4 minutes just to process a voter registration application (if all goes well), and the system cannot be used to issue an absentee ballot. Because of the time crunch it faced in getting all municipalities to use SVRS for the fall elections, the state has not addressed its absentee ballot problems. In fact, the state no longer includes absentee ballots in its training sessions for clerks.

To ensure that the fall elections run smoothly, the Madison City Clerk's Office is entering all voter registration applications in both SVRS and Madison's reliable Revote System. This allows us to process absentee ballots through Revote, and gives us a back-up program should something go terribly wrong with SVRS. This means we are spending 4-5 minutes on each individual voter registration application.

The City Clerk's Office has been told that SVRS has a slower response time for the City of Madison because of its size; there are over 163,000 active registered voters in the City of Madison.

In the meantime, we are streamlining a lot of procedures in the City Clerk's Office to save time everywhere we can

- All of the manuals and instructions that are sent to polling places are being put in three-ring binders so we will no longer be physically collating them before and after each election. This will save us hours of labor every election.
- Election Officials used to return a letter to the City Clerk's Office, letting us know whether they would be working at the polls. Beginning this September, postcards will be used for Election Official responses. This will save us hours of slicing open up to 1,000 envelopes before each election.
- All license applications are now routed electronically to the Health Department, Police Department, Assessor's Office, Attorney's Office, Risk Management, and Parks. This is saving the City Clerk's Office time, paper, and toner on a daily basis.
- We are putting together a Tabulator Troubleshooting Guide so office staff can walk Election Officials through tabulator problems on Election Day before someone in the field could reach the polling place.

Although these changes will save us a considerable amount of time, additional help will be needed to process all voter registration applications and absentee ballot requests in two systems this fall. It is imperative that absentee ballots are sent out in a timely manner, and that all registered voters appear on the poll list.

I ask that you please support the attached resolution when it comes before you on Tuesday. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 266-4601.

Tomorrow I will be meeting with representatives of the State Elections Board, Madison Information Services, and the Mayor's Office to follow up on a list of Madison's outstanding SVRS concerns. I will keep you updated on both the response we receive from the state, and our ongoing preparations for the fall elections.