

**Madison Election Advisory Committee
Annual Report for 2012**

Introduction

This report covers activities throughout 2012, a year in which the Madison City Clerk’s office oversaw six elections, including standard spring and fall elections and two statewide recall elections. This report reflects information shared, exploration of priority topics selected by the committee, and discussions regarding city election processes held among committee members, staff in the clerk’s office and other city officials. The committee was generously supported by the City Clerk and her staff, along with our liaison from the Mayor’s Office.

Election Statistics

	February Spring Primary	April Spring General	May Recall Primary	June Recall General	August Partisan Primary	November General	TOTAL 2012
Voters							
Number of Voters	17,632	46,452	67,730	120,739	40,623	150,437	293,763
Voter Turnout	10.7%	28%	41%	73%	23%	81%	n/a
Absentees Issued	2,858	6,665	5,358	17,004	7,116	31,548	70,549
Absentees Counted at Polls	1,806	5,190	4,477	15,385	5,146	29,199	61,203
Absentees Rejected at Polls	7	60	17	48	14	86	232
Election Day Registrations	811	2,716	6,111	19,052	817	22,064	51,571
Election Officials							
Election Officials	1,043	1,159	1,202	1,279	1,035	1,634	7,352
Training Sessions	40	34	35	60	45	111	325

In 2012, the City Clerk’s Office administered 6 elections which served 293,763 voters. Adding to the complexity of a very busy election season was the uncertainty of the Wisconsin’s Voter ID law (2011

Wisconsin Act 23). In March of 2012, two Dane County Circuit Court judges issued injunctions preventing the State from enforcing the requirement to show a state-issued identification in order to vote. In September 2012, the Wisconsin Supreme Court declined to hear the two voter ID law cases. As of the drafting of this report, the two cases are in the Court of Appeals. Because of the injunctions, only the February 2012 election was conducted with a requirement for voters to display a government-issued identification. The following new provisions in Wisconsin Act 23 were not enjoined and applied to all 6 elections in 2012:

- the 28 day residency requirement,
- elimination of the corroborating witness for voter registration, and
- the requirement that voters sign the poll book

In April 2012, the new law 2011 Wisconsin Act 227 went into effect, prohibiting a voter who has returned a voted absentee ballot from voting at the polling place on Election Day. The City Clerk worked to train all election officials in the new process to verify absentee voters against the poll books.

Nearly all voting-related materials needed to be reprinted in 2012 because of the many changes in state elections law. Redistricting changes in the Statewide Voter Registration System delayed the printing of absentee labels for the spring primary election by over a week. The City Clerk's Office sent postcards to every Madison address that had a new polling place.

The Clerk's Office continued to offer online training for election officials in 2012. In addition to the online training, the Clerk's Office held in-person training sessions throughout the year. A total of 7,352 election officials were trained in 325 different training sessions. Because of recent changes in election law, the City Clerk's office continued to host informational voter outreach sessions. At the time of this report, the office had hosted nearly 840 sessions. [NOTE: This should be changed to reflect the # of sessions in 2012.]

As described above, 2012 presented a challenge to the Madison election system. While many of the challenges were visible to the voting public, such as longer lines and increased election communications, many were not. Much of the work required for elections to run smoothly in Madison happens between elections and behind the scenes at City Clerk's office. Under normal election year circumstances, there is enough time between elections for the Clerk's office to complete these duties. However, with the frequency and uncertainty of elections and election law in 2012, the Clerk's office was challenged to be creative and flexible during the short time between elections. One example was the time crunch between state certification of the May 8 primary results and the June 5 recall election. Because of the late certification, the clerk's office was unable to receive the ballots until two weeks prior to the election. To remain on time with the absentee mailings, the clerk's office needed to mail 6,025 absentee ballots on the same day that in-person absentee voting and tabulator testing began. The City Clerk reached out to the League of Women Voters of Dane County for assistance. With their help, the City Clerk's office was able to mail all 6,025 absentee ballots on time. Without the help of volunteers, the City Clerk would have been unable to meet the demand of the election year.

The members of the Madison Election Advisory Committee would like to recognize and thank the City Clerk's staff for the outstanding work undertaken this year to ensure the accessibility and integrity of the elections in 2012.

2012 Priorities for MEAC

In discussion with the City Clerk, MEAC members worked with the staff to explore opportunities in the following priority areas:

(1) Diversity of election officials with an emphasis on outreach to under-represented population groups

The city of Madison's Department of Civil Rights helped the City Clerk with recruitment this year. As a result, there has been an increase in involvement.

(2) Appreciation of election officials

For both the City Clerk and MEAC, communicating appreciation to poll workers across the city for their commitment and good work was a high priority. The City Clerk sent thank you letters directly to all poll workers this year. Additionally, the City Clerk issued 21 Conscientious Inspector Awards across the various 2012 elections. Those winners were:

2012 February Primary:

- Marilyn Williams, Wingra School

2012 Spring Election (April):

- Greg Smith, Hy-Vee
- David Cobb, O'Keefe Middle School
- Bonnie Chang, Student Services Center
- LaVerne Quam, Coventry Village
- Lucetta Kanetzke, Coventry Village
- Sharon Flinn, Head Start
- Baxter Exum, Chavez Elementary

2012 Recall Primary (May):

- Jeanette Williams, Wil-Mar Neighborhood Center
- Michael Howe, Wil-Mar Neighborhood Center

2012 Recall Election (June):

- Gary Poulson
- Anne Murphy-Lom
- Leslie Grossberg
- Jill Hellmer
- Tom Hilston

2012 August Partisan Primary

- Barbara McKinney
- Karen Peters
- Randy Black
- Jackie Lencioni
- Bonnie Poole
- Terry Poole

2012 November General:

- Math Heinzl
- Deb Beiler
- Jean Espenshade

(3) Quality control at polling locations on election days

In 2012, the City Clerk and the volunteer poll workers instituted additional processes to assist with the new requirements and keep the very high standards of quality of prior elections. A sampling of these activities includes:

- using a greeter to handle long lines and to explain new election rules,
- conducting an absentee voter cross check,
- specialized poll worker training based on audience needs, and
- advanced preparation for chief inspectors.

(4) Monitoring of legislation at the state level that may affect local election processes

As in previous years, the MEAC continued to discuss legislation at its regular committee meetings. Various members, as well as City Clerk's staff, presented the committee with updates on pending or adopted legislation and its impact on Madison voters.

(5) Diversity of the Election Advisory Committee

At this time, the Madison Election Advisory Committee has all seven of its appointments filled. As new vacancies occur, the MEAC members and the City Clerk, will work with various groups, such as the Civil Rights Division, to raise awareness of the MEAC to achieve a more diverse committee.

(6) Track the effects of the new state election laws

At every meeting the Committee discussed the impact of new election laws on voters and on the workload of the Clerk's Office. Implementing the changes was made more challenging by the added number of elections and the timing of the recall elections. The City Clerk's office determined that, generally speaking, because of the changes in election law nearly twice as many election officials were needed to provide the best service to voters casting ballots at the polls.

2011 Wisconsin Act 227 makes it illegal for a citizen who has already submitted a voted ballot to the City Clerk to cast a ballot at the polls on Election Day. This is a significant change from previous law, which allowed a person to cast a ballot on Election Day as long as the absentee ballot had not been counted. In such a case, the absentee ballot would not be counted. A person who violates the new law may be fined up to \$1,000 or imprisoned for up to 6 months or both. To prevent violations of Act 227, the Madison City Clerk provided specific training to election officials.

Innovations in the Clerk's Office Impacting the Election Process

The committee recognizes the following innovations, which have been mentioned in other parts of this report:

1. Online Election Official training
2. Specialized / topical Election Official training options
3. Voter Outreach sessions

Appendix

Charge

The Madison Election Advisory Committee was created in 2006 with the following charge:

- Evaluate current procedures for elections.
- Make recommendations for improvements in registration, polling places, voting equipment, election official training, ballots, absentee ballots and tabulating votes.
- Monitor elections for optimal and appropriate accuracy, convenience, fairness and legality.
- Evaluate and make recommendations on State and Federal law changes if they relate to elections.
- Recommend methods to maintain proper balance between the security of elections, openness of the process and the right to a secret ballot.
- Solicit public comments and recommendations.
- Forward an annual report to the Council, Mayor, or City Clerk.

Membership Criteria

Citizen members shall not hold office or employment with the City of Madison, nor, for one year prior to being appointed to the Committee and while serving on the Committee, shall any member have been a member of a political party, an officer or member of a committee in any political club or organization or a candidate for any elective public office.

As of December 2012, the Committee consists of seven (7 out of 7) appointed citizen members and two non-voting members, the City Clerk and the County Clerk.

Nicci Fite, Chair
Sybil Better, Vice-Chair
Andrea Kaminski
Rosa Garner
Paul Malischke
Jennifer Rubin
Sam Owens
Maribeth Witzel-Behl (Ex-officio, non-voting)

Final revision: March 12, 2013