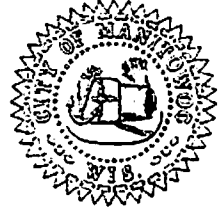


# CITY OF MANITOWOC

WISCONSIN, USA  
www.manitowoc.org



TO: Finance Committee  
Aldersperson James Brey, Chair

FROM: City Clerk Deborah Neuser

DATE: December 13, 2019

RE: Municipal Code Section 1.040  
Central Count of Absentee Ballots on Election Day

I have done extensive research on Central Count of absentee ballots on election day and also recently attended a Wisconsin Elections Commission conference where one of the topics was Central Count.

Absentee balloting has become very popular over the last several years. Managing the increase in absentee ballots being processed at the polls has required a full review of how to best handle making sure those ballots get processed on Election Day with the least amount of disruption at the polling place. Wisconsin State law allows the City of Manitowoc to hold a "Central Count" of absentee ballots by creating a Board of Absentee Ballot Canvassers who will count ALL absentee ballots at City Hall on Election Day and cast those ballots into one central tabulator. Counting for April, 2020, will begin at 8 a.m. and will go until ALL ballots have been processed. Totals will be transmitted to the County after the polls close at 8 p.m. and final totals will be posted to the City website. The polls are extremely busy on Presidential Election Day and processing of absentee ballots before the polls close is nearly impossible. This means the pollworkers will be working from 6:30 a.m. to possibly 11 p.m. or midnight with is a lot to ask.

Some of the key issues are:

- 1) Wisconsin law allows for voters to vote absentee. Wisconsin has "no excuse" absentee voting which means a voter may cast an absentee ballot without providing a reason. The City has experienced an increase in absentee voters in the last 10 years. Absentee ballots present a challenge to poll workers on Election Day because of the resources to process an absentee ballot.
- 2) Two pollworkers are required to process every absentee ballot received at the polling place. The pollworkers must check the ballot envelope for defects, open the envelope, announce the voter's name, receive a tally slip, and put the ballot into the tabulator. Pollworkers often have to disrupt voters who vote in person at the polls by creating lines at the check in table and the tabulator. Some ballots need to be remade for one reason or the other and some are rejected for various reasons.

**Deborah Neuser, CMC, City Clerk**

**CITY HALL - 900 Quay Street - Manitowoc, WI 54220-4543**

**Phone (920) 686-6950 - Fax (920) 686-6959 - dneuser@manitowoc.org**



- 3) Wisconsin Stats. 7.52 and 7.53(2)(m) allow for the creation of a Board of Absentee Ballot Canvassers. These individuals are appointed by the City Clerk to serve two year terms. The Board of Absentee Ballot Canvassers process all absentee ballots in the City regardless of ward. In order to create a Board of Absentee Ballot Canvassers, the City Council must adopt an ordinance under State Stat. 7.52 and 7.53(2)(m). The ordinance must be created at least 30 days prior to the election it will be implemented. Adoption of this Ordinance will allow for the Absentee Board of Canvassers to work the April, 2020 Presidential Preference and Spring General Election.
- 4) Removing absentee ballot processing from polling places to a centralized count facility should make voting at the polling places more efficient for citizens and pollworkers. Chief Inspectors will no longer need to dedicate two or more pollworkers to the processing of absentee ballots. This will allow those pollworkers to be put into other positions to serve the citizens voting in person at the polls on Election Day.
- 5) The April election is expected to be very busy. The last Presidential Preference Primary election (2016) had 1,302 absentee voters and the last Presidential election (2016) had 4,469 absentee voters. It is important to create a Board of Absentee Ballot Canvassers prior to the April election so the Board can be appointed, trained and have a few elections to work before the Presidential election.

A draft of the ordinance establishing Central Count is attached for your reference along with the Central Count Procedures, both of which have to be submitted to the Wisconsin Elections Commission for approval.

Clerks that use Central Count have found it to be very helpful finding value in the process even for small elections. The Beloit City Clerk states that her election workers continually thank her for moving absentee ballots out of the polling place.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

## ORDINANCE

An Ordinance to create Section 1.040 of the Manitowoc Municipal Code to allow for Central Count of absentee ballots for elections.

The Mayor and Common Council of the City of Manitowoc do ordain as follows:

**Section 1.** Section 1.040 is created to read as follows:

"1.040 is created to read as follows:

1.040 Central Count.

- (1) Adoption of Wisconsin State Statute § 7.52. Wisconsin State Statute, § 7.52 abbreviated Wis. Stats. is hereby adopted, in its entirety by reference, as amended or renumbered from time to time, including but not limited to the specific provisions set forth in detail under 40-2 below.
- (2) Municipal Board of Absentee Canvassers/Procedures.
  - (a) Central canvassing of absentee ballots. Pursuant to § 7.52 and § 7.53(2m) of the Wis. Stats., the Mayor and Common Council of the City of Manitowoc hereby creates a Municipal Board of Absentee Canvassers and authorizes the centralized counting of absentee ballots on election days, in accordance with all procedures prescribed by § 7.52.
  - (b) The Municipal Board of Absentee Canvassers shall be composed of the municipal clerk, or a qualified elector of the municipality designated by the clerk, and two other qualified electors of the municipality appointed by the clerk for a term of two years commencing on January 1 of each even-number year. The clerk may appoint additional inspectors under § 7.52(1)(b), Wis. Stats., to assist the Municipal Board of Absentee Canvassers in canvassing absentee ballots under this section.
  - (c) The City of Manitowoc declares that, in lieu of canvassing absentee ballots at polling places under § 6.88 of the Wis. Stats., the Municipal Board of Absentee Canvassers shall canvass all absentee ballots at all elections held in the municipality, at Manitowoc City Hall, 900 Quay St., Manitowoc, WI 54220, or such other location designated by the Clerk and set forth in the Notice of Meeting under (d) below.
  - (d) At every election held in the City of Manitowoc following enactment of this Ordinance, the Municipal Board of Absentee Canvassers shall, any time after the opening of the polls and before 10:00 p.m. on election day, publically convene to count the absentee ballots for the City.
- E. The municipal clerk shall give at least 48 hours' notice of any meeting of the Municipal Board of Absentee Canvassers under § 7.52(1)(a) Wis. Stats.
- F. The municipal clerk, no later than the closing hour of the polls, shall post at his or her office and on the City's website, and shall make available to any person upon request, a statement of the number of absentee ballots that the clerk has mailed or transmitted to electors and those ballots that have been returned by the closing hour on election day. This posting shall not include the names or addresses of any electors.

G. The Municipal Board of Absentee Ballot Canvassers shall follow the remaining procedures prescribed under § 7.52 Wis. Stats.”

INTRODUCED \_\_\_\_\_ ADOPTED \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Justin M. Nickels, Mayor

APPROVED \_\_\_\_\_

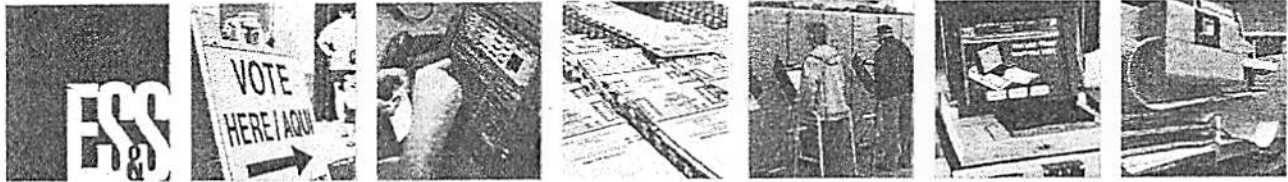
Fiscal Impact:  
Funding Source:  
Finance Director approval:  
Approved as to form:

This ordinance was drafted by Deborah Neuser, City Clerk

**CENTRAL COUNT FOR 2020 FISCAL IMPACT**

No. of Absentees (est.)	Election Day	No. of Canvassers	Pay per Hour	Est. No. of Hours	Total
1500	April, 2020	5	\$8.00	14	\$560.00
600	August, 2020	3	\$8.00	7	\$168.00
5000	November, 2020	10	\$8.00	15	\$1,200.00
					\$1,928.00
Clerk & MRK to assist end of night					\$0
Training Board Canvassers			\$10 each		\$100.00
ES & S (thumb drive)					Unknown
Rent two DS200s for Nov.					\$2,420.00
					<b>\$4,448.00</b>

1100-13200-511500



City of Manitowoc  
**Rental Proposal Quote**  
 Submitted by Election Systems & Software

Rental Solution Includes:

<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Item Description</u>	<u>Price</u>
<b>Tabulation Hardware:</b>		
<b>Model DS200 Precinct Scanner:</b>		
1	Model DS200 (Includes Scanner, Plastic Ballot Box with Steel Door and e-Bin, Paper Roll and Standard 4GB Memory Device)	\$865.00
<b>Services:</b>		
1	Installation - DS200	\$115.00
<b>Shipping &amp; Other:</b>		
1	Shipping - (M100/DS200 Based on Non-Truckload Quantities)	\$230.00
<b>Total Rental Solution</b>		<b>\$1,210.00</b>

**Footnotes:**

1. Pricing reflects Per Election rental rates utilizing rental pool equipment. Rental equipment is subject to availability at time of requested delivery.
2. This quote is an estimate and is subject to final review and approval by both ES&S and the Customer.
3. Rates valid for 30 days and thereafter may change.
4. Any applicable (City & State) sales taxes have not been included in pricing and are the responsibility of the customer.
5. The quantity of service days reflects a reasonable estimate for implementation and selected ongoing election services. Quantities may change depending on specific Customer needs.
6. A Rental Cancellation Fee of 10% of the Total Rental Solution Fee shall apply in the event the Customer does not provide written notification to ES&S of its intent to cancel an Election at least forty-five (45) days prior to a scheduled Election covered under an Agreement between ES&S and the Customer.

### **BOARD OF ABSENTEE BALLOT CANVASSERS' DUTIES**

1. Convene the Board of Absentee Ballot Canvassers between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. on Election Day to canvass absentee ballots in accordance with Wisconsin Statute 7.52(1)(a).
2. Canvass all absentee ballots received before 8 p.m. in accordance with Wisconsin State Statutes as explained in the Election Day Manual (Appendix II).
3. Complete a log of all activity that occurred during the Board of Absentee Ballot Canvassers Meeting.

### **APPENDIX I - SUPPLIES**

The following supplies will be provided for each election to the Board of Absentee Ballot Canvassers:

- 2 duplicate copies of a single poll list for the entire City or 2 duplicate copies of the absentee log printed from the WisVote System and supplemental poll list
- Sufficient large ballot envelopes/bags/containers prepared with Chain of Custody and Certificate signed by the Board
- Sufficient Inspectors' Statements (EL-104) (a single Inspectors' Statement must be maintained for each ward)
- Sufficient large envelopes for Used Certificate Envelopes (EL-103)
- Sufficient large envelopes for Rejected Absentee Ballot Envelopes (EL-102)
- Sufficient large envelopes labeled "Original Ballots that were Duplicated"
- Sufficient write-in tally forms (a single tally sheet must be maintained for each ward)
- Number sheets or tally slips
- Election Day Manual for reference
- Red pens for marking poll lists
- Ballots for remaking voted ballots if necessary
- Ballot marking pens
- Challenge documentation for reference
- List of Proof of Residence Documentation (can also be found in Election Day Manual)

**APPENDIX II - PROCEDURES FOR PROCESSING BALLOTS (TAKEN FROM THE ELECTION DAY MANUAL)**

1. Open container of absentee ballots.
2. Ballots sorted by ward and alphabetically.
3. Remove one Absentee Certificate Envelope (EL-122) and announce the elector's name.
4. Carefully review the certificate envelope to determine that:
  - a. Envelope is not open.
  - b. Envelope has not been opened and then resealed.
  - c. Signature of the elector appears on the certificate.
  - d. Address of the voter is on the certificate and the address is within the municipality.
  - e. Certificate contains the signature and address of one witness who is an adult US Citizen.
5. If the certificate envelope is found to be insufficient:
  - a. Do not open the envelope. Put the ballot to the side until 8 pm.
  - b. At 8 pm, if the voter has not corrected the deficiency, Mark the envelope "Rejected ballot # \_\_\_" (beginning with "1" for each ward). Write the reason for the rejection on the envelope and on the Inspectors' Statement.
  - c. Do not issue the elector a voter number.
  - d. List the elector's name, identifying serial number of the rejected ballot and the reasons for rejection on the Inspectors' Statement (EL-104). Use one Inspectors' Statement (EL-104) for each District.
  - e. Place the unopened certificate envelope in the Certificate of Rejected Absentee Ballots (EL-102) brown carrier envelope (one envelope for municipality).
6. If the certificate is found to be sufficient, carefully remove the ballot from the certificate envelope. Upon accepting each absentee ballot, the Board of Absentee Ballot Canvassers shall mark in red the voter tally # on the back of the ballot and on the pre-printed poll list next to the name of the elector, along with the indication the voter cast an absentee ballot (ABS), beginning with the number 1. If the elector's name does not appear on the pre-printed poll list, the Board of Absentee Ballot Canvassers shall enter the name and voter number on the supplemental poll list.
7. Examine the ballots to ensure that:
  - a. Only one ballot is enclosed.



b. That the ballots contain the initials of the issuing Clerk. (Ballot is not rejected if initials of issuing Clerk are not present. Notation should be made on the Inspectors' Statement).

8. Place the ballots in the tabulating device. If ballots are rejected by the tabulator, poll workers should attempt to determine voter intent and remake the ballot if necessary using the procedure for remaking ballots. Duplicated ballots should be initialed by two members of the Absentee Board of Canvassers. Remade ballots must be documented on the "Original Ballots that were Duplicated Envelope" and the "Addition to Inspectors Statement". If voter intent cannot be determined, ballot should be tabulated using the override key. The tabulator will increment voter number by one and any vote that can be counted will be counted.

9. Place the used certificate envelope in the Used Certificate Envelopes of Absentee Electors (EL-103) white carrier envelope. Rejected absentee ballots and used certificate envelopes are not required to be maintained by reporting unit. Rejected absentee ballots may be placed in a single Rejected Absentee Ballot (EL-102) envelope or container. Used certificate envelopes may be placed in a single Used Certificate envelope or container.

10. All absentee ballots must be taken to the polling location prior to 8:00 p.m. to be placed in the tabulator. At 8:00 p.m. the polls are officially closed and no additional absentee ballots shall be accepted. Totals are printed and write-ins counted on 2 duplicate write-in forms. The totals of the absentee ballots will be transmitted to the County Clerk.

#### **Handling Absentee Ballots when Proof of Residence is Required**

If the voter list and the Absentee Certificate Envelope have the notation from the Municipal Clerk "ID required", the inspectors first check to see if the voter included the required identifying document showing Proof of Residence in the certificate envelope if the envelope is sufficient as determined by #4 above, Procedures for Processing Ballots.

#### **Procedure:**

1. Open the Absentee Certificate Envelope to check if proof of residence is included in the envelope. (For an absentee voter, a copy of any of the documentation listed in the Election Day Manual is sufficient proof of residence).
2. If the required proof of residence is in the envelope, the election inspectors continue to process the absentee ballot following the procedures above.

Record on poll list type of document provided.

If the required proof is NOT in the envelope, the absentee ballot is considered a provisional ballot. Continue with the procedure below.

3. Make a notation on the voter registration list indicating that the voter did not provide the required proof of residence and issue a provisional voter number for the voter: "PV# \_\_\_(PR)" (beginning with '1').
4. Remove the ballot from the envelope and mark the back of the ballot with the PV# and "Section 6.97". Place the ballot back inside the Absentee Certificate Envelope.
5. Write the PV# and "Section 6.97" on the outside of the Absentee Certificate Envelope.
6. Place the Absentee Certificate Envelope bearing the PV# and "Section 6.97" on the outside of the Provisional Certificate Envelope (EL-123). You do not have to fill in the rest of the EL-123. Seal the envelope, and place inside the Provisional Ballot Carrier Envelope (EL-108). **Challenging Absentee Ballots** An absentee ballot may be challenged in the same manner as it would be challenged at the polling place.

#### **Handling Ballots when Proof of Identification is Required**

If the Absentee Certificate Envelope indicates that proof of identification or the Certification of Authorized Care Facility Representative is required, it is the responsibility of the election inspector to ensure that the elector included proof of identification along with the absentee ballot or completed the appropriate certification section before the ballot may be counted. Follow these procedures:

1. Determine if the Certification of Authorized Care Facility Representative is completed. If complete, continue to process the absentee ballot as normal.
  - a. Name of Facility
  - b. Signature of Representative (may be the same person as the witness)
2. If the certification section is not completed, open the Absentee Certificate Envelope to check if the missing documentation is included in the envelope. (Acceptable forms of proof of identification may be found in the "Electors" section of this manual.)
  - a. If the missing documentation is in the envelope, the election inspector continues to process the absentee ballot.
  - b. If the missing documentation is not in the envelope, the absentee ballot is rejected.

Any qualified elector may challenge an absentee ballot.

The Board of Absentee Ballot Canvassers shall challenge an absentee ballot cast by an elector whose name appears on the ineligible voter list. Procedures are set forth the Election Day Manual and using the EL-104-C to document the challenge.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

Note the "Frequently Asked Questions" under the "Handling Absentee Electors" in the Election Day Manual for additional information on the handling of absentee ballots. **Completing and Delivering of Forms (Use if Alternate method of processing is not used.)**

### **Completing and Delivering of Forms**

Municipalities utilizing an optical scan voting system shall use two machine printouts as tally sheets. However, write-in votes must be recorded on duplicate original Write-in forms (EL-105), which are signed by the Board of Absentee Ballot Canvassers. The ballots and materials shall be delivered to the City Clerk to deliver to the County Clerk with all other materials and ballots, and after completing, recording and securing the required forms. As at the polls, all ballots must be secured in a ballot bag with the signatures of the Municipal Board of Absentee Ballot Canvassers.

### **Return of Absentee Ballots on Election Day by electors**

Voters attempting to return Absentee Ballots to a polling place other than the place designated for central count should be advised to return the ballot to the central count location. Ballots must be returned no later than 8:00 p.m. the day of the election except absentee ballots sent to Military electors which follow time lines set out in 6.22 of the Wisconsin Statutes.

**CHECK LIST AND PROCEDURES FOR CANVASSING OF ABSENTEE BALLOTS BY THE BOARD OF ABSENTEE  
BALLOT CANVASSERS IN THE CITY OF MANITOWOC**

**CITY CLERK'S DUTIES**

1. Shall give at least 48 hours-notice of the meeting of the Board of Absentee Ballot Canvassers under s. 7.52, Wis. Stats. Additionally, the notice will be provided to any media that has requested City of Manitowoc meeting notices in accordance with Wisconsin Statute 19.84(1)(b) and City policy.
2. Will appoint the Board of Absentee Ballot Canvassers in accordance with Wisconsin Statute 7.53(m)(b). The Clerk will assign additional poll workers to work under the supervision of the Absentee Board of Canvass in accordance with Wisconsin Statute 7.52(1)(b).
3. Will ensure that all members of the Board of Absentee Canvassers take an oath of office prior to performing their duties.
4. Sends to each polling place a log of all absentee ballots for that polling place.
5. Brings absentee ballots to location of Board of Absentee Ballot Canvassers.
6. Places on Internet and posts in office the number of absentee ballots issued and the number returned prior to 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.
7. Issues supplies to the Absentee Board of Canvass necessary to complete the canvass of absentee ballots.