

SANTA FE COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
COUNTY CANVASSING BOARD
SPECIAL MEETING

June 14, 2024

Hank Hughes, Chair - District 5
Camilla Bustamante, Vice Chair - District 3
Justin Greene - District 1
Anna T. Hamilton - District 4
Anna Hansen - District 2

SFC CLERK RECORDED 11/27/2024

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SPECIAL MEETING
COUNTY CANVASSING BOARD

June 14, 2024

1. A. This special meeting of the Santa Fe County Canvassing Board was called to order at approximately 2:20 p.m. by Chair Hank Hughes in the County Commission Chambers, 102 Grant Avenue, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

B. Roll Call

Roll was called by County Clerk Katherine Clark and indicated the presence of a quorum as follows:

Members Present:

Commissioner Hank Hughes, Chair
Commissioner Camilla Bustamante
Commissioner Justin Greene
Commissioner Anna Hamilton
Commissioner Anna Hansen

Members Excused:

None

C. Approval of the Agenda

CHAIR HUGHES: Manager Shaffer, are there any changes to the agenda?

GREG SHAFFER (County Manager): None from the County Manager's Officer, Mr. Chair, and I would defer to the County Clerk if she has any changes.

CHAIR HUGHES: No changes from the Clerk.

COMMISSIONER HAMILTON: Mr. Chair, I move to approve the agenda.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: Second. .

CHAIR HUGHES: Motion by Commissioner Hamilton and second by Commissioner Bustamante. All in favor.

The motion passed by unanimous [5-0] voice vote.

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D. Request Approval of March 12, 2024, Canvassing Board Special Meeting Minutes

COMMISSIONER HAMILTON: Mr. Chair, move to approve the minutes.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: Second.

CHAIR HUGHES: Motion by Commissioner Hamilton and second by Commissioner Bustamante. All in favor.

The motion passed by unanimous [5-0] voice vote.

E. Request Approval of the June 4, 2024, Primary Election Report of the Canvass, Pursuant to NMSA 1978, Section 1-13-13(A)

CLERK CLARK: Thank you, Chair Hughes. So this was a fairly straight-forward election. It is a primary election so we don't see as much turnout as we might during a general election. However, Santa Fe County by a lot had the most turn out throughout the state. The average I think was about 25 percent and we had nearly 29 percent turnout for eligible voters. You can see our numbers in the document that we included with our materials. We actually spent some time working with our voters to try and make sure that we cured all of our ballots so we only ended up with 20 that were not cured. We actually call, we email, we even knock on the door of voters who need to cure their ballots to make sure that they know that, for whatever reason, that they didn't complete their ballot. So we had a very good cure rate this election and we actually introduced a new feature where you can cure your ballot online through an online portal. We actually did see a higher cure-rate this election than in previous elections.

We also introduced a feature that folks can vote on line who are UOCAVA, overseas voters, so we such a higher return rate from our military and oversees voters because it was easier for them to return their ballots. Santa Fe County has the highest voter turnout in the state by quite a lot and we're making it easier and easier to vote.

If you have a questions about the results, these are canvassing results. We went through each and every single vote and made sure that everything added up and these are the results we have.

CHAIR HUGHES: Any questions? Commissioner Hansen.

COMMISSIONER HANSEN: Earlier today we got this email, I hope you got it also from Chris Mechel. Can you please address that so we can put this to bed.

CLERK CLARK: Sure. His argument is that if the local county party has not turned in current rules that somehow should prevent the certification and election. That has nothing to do with us. If he has an issue with what the parties have turned in to the county level, then he should take that up with the Secretary of State. Our duty here as the Board that would certify the election is to only not certify should there be a problem with the election or have some reason to believe that the election results are not accurate. Just like in Otero County when they attempted not to certify the election they were actually – the Supreme Court actually – well, the Secretary of State put in a writ of mandamus to force Otero County to certify their election results. There is no reason to

believe that these results are not accurate. If there is an issue with the party rules that is something that he can take up with the Secretary of State.

COMMISSIONER HANSEN: Thank you

CHAIR HUGHES: Commissioner Greene.

COMMISSIONER GREENE: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Madam Clerk. I guess this is just a follow on question for one of the last requests that we had which was about the amount of money that we spend on elections. Turnout is great but we want to be as effective and judicious with our taxpayer money. So over the next few weeks it would be wonderful to see what your analysis is of all of the different polling places, whether more are necessary, less are prudent, different types of mechanisms are – whatever would be your recommendations on the best practices for us to be the most effective as possible.

I, for one, didn't wait more than – no, I didn't wait period. I walked right in and there were five people waiting for me right there. I waited because I said hi to everybody, right. So I don't know if that's overkill, overspending in this but whatever is the right amount to make sure that we make it so people don't have to wait more than a few minutes but also don't have a big, you know, hundreds of thousands of dollars bill of excess spending on this. It would be great to have your recommendations that could right size this.

CLERK CLARK: We actually have a presentation today on our first pass at analysis that we can talk about and then we will have a follow-up after. We're going to be meeting NMC next week and talking about our legislative priorities and one of the priorities, at least for Rosanegla and I, is how to not have as many polling sites if we have more and more voters who are on the permanent absentee list. The idea is that we can draw away from the amount of VCCs we need. We put capacity where we have voters who want to vote election day and then have absentee take up some of that capacity so we don't need to be ready for an onslaught of people coming on election day and therefore have to have as much through put because we've already essentially banked those vote with absentee balloting.

COMMISSIONER GREENE: Thank you. Did anybody have to wait more than 10 minutes anywhere at all during this time?

CLERK CLARK: Not in Santa Fe County.

COMMISSIONER GREENE: Right. I think 10 minutes maybe make me feel like I'm waiting but maybe make me meet my neighbor, right. That's about the right amount of time for community building that somebody can say is not an inconvenience but might actually be socialization of your neighbors.

CLERK CLARK: An MIT study in 2022 gave us high rankings because we had an average of three minutes in New Mexico. And as we move that number down, we get actually higher scores because for some people, if they see a line at all, they'll actually leave the polls. They won't get in line.

COMMISSIONER GREENE: I can appreciate that but they should have some patience and understand that that can happen.

And just for the record, I went and visited a bunch of polls during the election day and things seemed to be moving. I didn't see anybody ever waiting. And everybody was very cheerful and even when you guys were mobilizing here when the polls closed

everybody was all ready to go and it was pretty impressive. Thank you very much for running an effective operation for us.

CLERK CLARK: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER HAMILTON: Mr. Chair.

ROSANGELA ORTIZ (Chief Deputy Bureau of Elections): Mr. Chair.

CHAIR HUGHES: Commissioner Hamilton.

COMMISSIONER HAMILTON: I can wait until after.

CHAIR HUGHES: You can wait until after the presentation, very good.

MS. ORTIZ: I have the presentation so I can present now. Thank you for the opportunity.

CHAIR HUGHES: While you're getting ready, I would just like to say that I'm glad our attorney also looked into Chris Mechel's complaint and we don't have to pay attention to it because it not our duty at this time. So that's good. Now, Rosangela, go ahead.

MS. ORTIZ: Thank you. This is our org chart from March. As you can see we have four vacancies. During election season we multiple and we bring on about 500 temporary staff which includes help desk, same-day voter registration agents, our messenger team, our recon team, our poll workers, our absentee board, our training assistants, our interns and also election day staff. So this is how we grow during election season. This is where we will be as of Saturday. We've filled all of our middle-management positions, all were from current staff, so we promoted internally and we finally hired our warehouse manager. It would have been great to have hired him before the election but he starts on Saturday.

As you can see some of our lower entry level positions are now vacant. So we'll be recruiting them as well. The reason I wanted to show you this is that we had the election going on but our internal ins and outs of what happens at the Clerk's Office didn't stop.

This is our turnout by age. And our turnout by age seems to be the same every election. The 17,18 to 24 category is very low. And our largest category is the 65 to 74, that's what we call the "gray vote" which is very active in Santa Fe County.

There are studies about the cost of voting index and renters, language, minority, and first time voters, students it cost more to get them to vote. We just wanted to show you this data.

Our federally qualified electors are voting – their last known address was in Santa Fe County so they are able to vote and now they are able to vote on line so submit their ballot electronically. We do have a higher turnout for our FQE voters and this is our map. We have a voter in Madagascar. We have a voter in New Zealand and the majority of our voters overseas or abroad are from Mexico and Canada.

This is our turn out. The statewide turnout was 22 percent. Our turnout is 29 percent. We wanted to hit that 30 but we're at 29. If you look at Bernalillo they're turnout was 22, Sandoval their turnout was 21, Doña Ana's turnout was 15 and Los Alamos where there's quite a few voters that – I forget what their numbers are but their turnout was 24. So at 29, we're doing good.

We had a total of 847 same day voter registrations and 520 of those were on election day. We had 57 ballots rejected whether it was because they were missing a

signature or their last four, however, we did cure 27 of those 57.

We had a total of 5,115 ballots sent and received percentage of 86. So that's really high compared to other places. And we did have about 324 first-time voters.

This is all the new things we did this election. We had a new polling site, Nancy Rodriguez. We had really cool signage that said, Have you voted yet? And we put those all over the County. We can recycle them and use them any election for the next four years. We also had security contracts and that was at our current warehouse, at our new warehouse and also at each of the EV sites. We had a new look and feel of our polling sites; tablecloths, that made the difference. We also had a candidate training which won an award and we'll share that good news as well. We created three instagram reels and they got 900 views. I work at the Clerk's Office, one at Abedon Lopez because we wanted to promote that and also Nancy Rodriguez.

Ballots count, that was the way to electronically cure your ballot. That was an initiative that was deployed this election as addition to the federally-qualified electors who were able to vote online. We continue to do our senior outreach making sure that they know that they can be on the permanent absentee. We had a polling site mockup set up so we practiced setting up a polling site. Also, we had a few visits to some of our polling sites that are out there – Hondo Fire Station, La Tierra and Pojoaque Satellite. We were on the front page of the local section as we started the expanded early voting. We also had traffic control at the fairgrounds and this is our temp staff there directing traffic. We only had one fender bender and I guess at other elections there has been more. Voters get too excited, Where do I drop off my ballot? Where do I go?

We also had our BlueCrest machine delivered so that arrived May 29th and we transitioned the absentee board to our new warehouse. We have created new baselines with a lot of our internal procedures so our machine certification was done in less than two weeks. Our polling site teardown, we had to tear down 28 sites and that was done in two days. Also, our warehouse reset, getting the warehouse ready to go for the next election that took two weeks. So these are all our new baselines.

We did have quite a few unforeseen circumstances and we've created – what do they call it – a contingency plan for all of this. As you are aware one of our polling sites decided not to be a polling site so we had to go through a court order. We had to get legal involved. We had to do an expedited hearing. So we're ready in case that happens again. There was two construction sites at two of our polling sites so we were very involved with all of our different departments involved in that. So we still had voting there even though it was a construction site. We did have an IT-network outage so we'll work with IT to make sure that maybe we can prevent some of these outages or some of these update during election season. Wind and rain, our signage was damaged so we will work with Public Works to make sure we have more durable signage. And everyone who reached out to us first, we want to help you with whatever you need. So these are all of our unforeseen circumstances. I think there is a lot more than unusual.

Parking was a situation that we will better address in the general. We'll work with Public Works so we can have dedicated parking spaces off site. Some of our tabulator batteries were reaching end of life so we ordered already 30 batteries. There is an HR change in the middle of our election so we did have to do some damage control. We went to each polling site to ensure that they knew what was the plan and the reasoning

behind the change. A lot of things came up this election.

We did get awards through. We got six awards in the last two months. Three of these awards were from the Elections Assistance Commission. Our first-time voter sticker and our future-voter sticker and our tabulator security program also won an award in addition to our mentorship program. NACo also gave us three awards and that is for civic engagement, our infrastructure, energy and sustainability that was also Project Bruno. And our tabulator security program.

Now we get to see our election in pictures. We have the Abedon Lopez Community Center that is our all-female polling site. That was us visiting Hondo Fire Station and making sure that everyone is aware of the plan for setup. And that's us creating the PVC signs which is has been a really good design given the wind and the rain and everything going on.

We did have a bride vote for early voting right before her wedding. So she wore her I voted sticker on her wedding dress. And I did get assistance putting up signs from the gentleman in red. He is not vertically challenged and he's our counterpart. We also did senior outreach. There's kids and Cindy making sure that our senior citizens have all the information that they need. We also painted the lines at the Galisteo Community Center. We attended a construction meeting to make sure that election day is part of their holiday list and we helped people get registered to vote at senior citizen facilities.

That is our "have you voted yet?" sign. We really wanted to put, are you going to vote or what? But we went with have you voted yet. And this is part of the election in pictures but I also wanted to share this slide here. Our messenger team and the supervisor, we compared it to last election. We looked at the five-pay periods not including this pay period and we did see that there is a decrease in labor hours by 300 plus. So we are making sure that now that we have new baselines of expectations we are going to continue to perform at this level and we are trying to save money as much as we can but at the same time provide high quality and accuracy.

This slide shows how many people it takes to put on this election but also that our clerk's office I think is very unique in that we get to work with almost every department in the County, especially this election. We were attending – Risk was involved, Public Works was helping us with construction and fleet, we had 10 cars at our warehouse ready to go right when we needed them. HR, Payroll, Legal, Finance, Community Services and the Senior Centers – we are, I think, one of the only departments that gets to work with every agency. So everyone came together to help us and like I was telling Katharine and Jenny, they reached out to me. They're like, We know you need help. We're here to help just let us know what we can do. And we were, Thank you. The Sheriff's Office as well. We had them reaching out to us to make sure we were safe and protected

It takes an entire county to put on an election and this is us on election night after working 19 hours. Yeah, our backs were hurting a little bit.

So that is our presentation. If there's any other questions we can answer them now.

CHAIR HUGHES: Commissioner Hamilton.

COMMISSIONER HAMILTON: Yeah, it's actually good that I waiting because the serious comment and I think it came out in the presentation was this was a well run, seamless election. You guys, would have be ready to canvass earlier which is –

that's amazing. For all the years that I have been here, we've usually canvass on Friday a week and a half after because it takes minimally that much time. And I'm glad you have a lot of the staff here because I just wanted to commend you for running such a nice, seamless, excellent election. I know how hard you guys all worked and it's a big deal. Congratulations.

And then there's the matter of the Gray Wave. It sounds so dull and serious. At least Community Services calls it the Silver Tsunami. That sounds so much smarter to me.

CLERK CLARK: We'll take note.

COMMISSIONER HAMILTON: Thanks for doing such a good job.

Good job.

CHAIR HUGHES: Okay. And we're done I assume. We need a motion.

COMMISSIONER HAMILTON: I'd like to move to accept our Santa Fe County's canvassing results.

COMMISSIONER BUSTAMANTE: I'll second.

CHAIR HUGHES: Motion by Commissioner Hamilton and seconded by Commissioner Bustamante. All in favor.

The motion passed by unanimous [5-0] voice vote.

2. Concluding Business

A. Announcements

CHAIR HUGHES: Any announcements before we close?

COMMISSIONER GREENE: Mr. Chair.

CHAIR HUGHES: Yes.

COMMISSIONER GREENE: Thank you. We will miss your presence, Jeff. Please, safe travels.

CHAIR HUGHES: Yes.

COMMISSIONER HANSEN: Thank you very much for your service to Santa Fe County. [Applause] We know you're not really leaving and you'll be here virtually for a little while but you're not going to be here physically with us. Your physical presence will be missed.

COMMISSIONER HAMILTON: Yes.

CHAIR HUGHES: Definitely. All right, thank you, Commissioner Greene.

B. Adjournment

CHAIR HUGHES: Can I have a motion to adjourn.

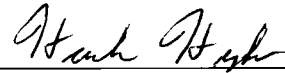
COMMISSIONER GREENE: Move to adjourn.

COMMISSIONER HAMILTON: I'll second that.

CHAIR HUGHES: Motion by Commissioner Greene and second by Commissioner Hamilton. All in favor.

The motion to adjourn passed by unanimous [5-0] voice vote at 2:45 p.m.

Approved by:



Hank Hughes, Chair
Board of County Commissioners


ATTEST TO:



KATHARINE E. CLARK
SANTA FE COUNTY CLERK



Respectfully submitted:

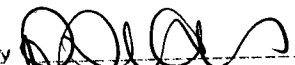

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COUNTY OF SANTA FE)
STATE OF NEW MEXICO) ss

CANVASS BOARD MINUTES
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Deputy  County Clerk, Santa Fe, NM

Witness My Hand And Seal Of Office
Katharine E. Clark

SFC CLERK RECORDED 11/27/2024