

Judge Hinojosa remarked that everyone was familiar with the problems experienced during the Primary Elections. (Item No. 1) and that most were interested in Item no. 2.

He noted that the first problem was the Aindelible ink@ and how to deal with that.

The Elections Administrator recommended the use of pencils because the ballot paper was the only one available, and that she had not found other markers besides Sharpies that do not Ableed@.

Mr. Juan Hernandez, Precinct Judge, stated that during the Recount process, that the use of pens were not rejected; whether they were blue or black. He added that the rejections were due to the use of check marks or AX-s@.

The Elections Administrator stated that she was told that the scanner rejected the use of pens.

Judge Hinojosa-s question, AWhat-s the answer to that, is it, or is it not?@

The Elections Administrator noted that she was not present at the Central count, and was told by the calculators and technicians that the machine was stopping.

Judge Hinojosa questioned what the Vendors had to say, and the Elections Administrator stated that the company recommended the use of pencils.

Judge Hinojosa questioned whether the regular pens could be used and the Elections Administrator responded that the Sharpie-s could be used. She noted that regular pens should not be used because not all the pens have the same amount of carbon, and added, A and you want to instruct them to use whatever you provide for them.@

Judge Hinojosa noted that according to Mr. Hernandez, none of the ballots were rejected because of the pen? Mr. Hernandez explained the experience during the Recount, that being that the rejections were due to the use of X-s or check marks outside the ovals.

Ms. Ann Shepherd, Republican Chairperson, questioned whether the votes were counted or not; and what the issue was after that?

Judge Hinojosa noted that it delayed the count, because something would cause the machine to stop when it got to certain ballots and we had understood that part of the problem was that it did not count pens.

Ms. Cano noted that the company had stated that the machine needed certain amount of carbon in the pens.

Mr. Tony Yzaguirre questioned whether the machines were tested before and could the machine read any type of pen.

Ms. Cano reiterated that the company said no.

Mr. Vela noted that there was definitely ink that was not black in nature, that was Akicked out@, some blue or red.

Judge Hinojosa noted that he wanted to meet with the Vendors and have them tell him that there is no other pen that can be used on this thing. He directed the Elections Administrator to schedule them at 8:30 in the morning on Tuesday of the following week.

Mr. Vela noted if Sharpies were to be used, then it would be part of the educational process and distribute them to all the Precincts.

[EDUCATION]

Judge Hinojosa questioned what was being done as to the education side of the issue and the Elections Administrator stated that she had contacted the media, companies with large numbers of employees, City, hospitals and churches and had prepared the following packet with the sample ballots and instructions on how to vote.

Judge Hinojosa questioned whether the Elections Administrator had prepared a specific Agenda and Ms. Cano responded that she would start the following week, beginning with the Navigation District at the Port Hospitals and some companies. She added that she was waiting on the television station as to the time of the programs.

Mr. Vela suggested that the candidates on the ballots be recruited to assist with the instruction.

Mr. Tony Yzaguirre questioned what precautions had been taken as to the sealing or locking of the boxes and to have some kind of log as to the location of boxes.

Ms. Cano noted that she would have logs for everything and had spoken to Mr. Crow (Elections Judge) and they are working on doing exactly what we are supposed to do to seal them and have everything recorded.

Mr. Vela suggested to have an individual to be an oversight person, to ensure that the Judges do their jobs and to ensure that the boxes are sealed and locked, post Elections and for storage purposes, if there is a recount.

Judge Hinojosa suggested a Precinct Chairperson, and suggested to appoint Mr. Hernandez to work with the Elections Administrator and be present when the Elections Administrator trained the Elections Judges.

Mr. Muñoz noted that the Elections Code suggested to have a Central Counting Station Manager and the Elections Administrator noted that a Manager was retained and knows what to do.

Ms. Cano noted the concern regarding the tabulation at the warehouse, and stated that it would be possible to move it to the Central Jury Room, and request guidance from the Commission.

Judge Hinojosa expressed his objection, noted that the least number of places to transport the boxes, the better.

Mr. Vela noted that it does take time to sort the mail-in ballots and the issues about time frames and that the concern should be more with security.

Mr. Hernandez noted there should be no problem doing the sorting the day before and done accurately and as to the law that he would be present as the Apost count overseer®, and he would be the Apost sorting overseer® for the Early Voting mail in, to ensure that it is opened and sealed properly.

Mr. Vela suggested to make it a policy for the Elections Commission to meet thirty (30) days before an Elections to ensure that the procedures are implemented every single time and not thirty (30) days after to make sure that the procedure were implemented and addressing any concerns.

Judge Hinojosa suggested to meet the first Tuesday in the afternoon, thirty (30) days prior to an Elections and the first Tuesday, the month after, unless other concerns come up.

Mr. Vela stated that in reference to the training sessions for the Elections Judges, it was his understanding that the Elections Administrator had scheduled two sessions.

The Elections Administrator stated that she had scheduled morning and evening training sessions the week of April 6, 1998, for four (4) hours. She added that the packets would be ready on Monday before the Elections.

Mr. Vela suggested that the Elections Administrator develop the Training agenda of the items covered and to have the Training logs for the Judges to sign at all the sessions.

Mr. Hernandez stated that on the Recount process, he discovered that the print-out material was not secured.

Mr. Vela suggested that the instructions for the ballot be Ablown-up® poster size for every precinct, and the Elections Administrator noted that it was already at the voting booths.

Judge Hinojosa suggested that Ms. Margarita Gonzalez, of the Brownsville Herald, develop graphics noting to voters to take I.D., and other voting requirements.

Ms. Gonzalez responded that she wrote an article prior to the Elections and she would check with her Editor as to the graphics.

Ms. Shepherd questioned whether if the Poll Judges did not attend training, would there be consequences, would they still be allowed to serve.

Judge Hinojosa noted that the Elections Commission was stating that Aif they don't attend training, they can not be Judges®.

Ms. Shepherd questioned how were the Judges were selected, in July by Commissioners Court, and what formula was used?

The Elections Administrator stated that in the new law County Commissioners would no longer appoint the Judges. She stated that the two parties would have to look at the governmental vote results note and the precinct with the most vote (general Elections); the prevailing party would select the judges.

Ms. Shepherd noted that not only should the Judges be trained, but also the Alternate Judge.

Mr. Vela requested the assistance of the Brownsville Herald in soliciting Elections Judges.

Mr. Hernandez noted a problem of Early Voting Ballots being used in the primary; and the Elections Administrator noted that she discussed the matter with the Secretary of State and they had allowed the use.

Mr. Muñoz noted that the Early Voting ballots were stamped for Early voting, and the respective Precinct, and there were no shortage of ballots.

Ms. Cano noted that she did not want to keep any Elections materials in the office, and preferred the Precinct to have them so that they did not run out of Ballots.

Mr. Hernandez stated that he was concerned with ordering more Ballots than needed, because there is a formula in the budget that states, how many voted in the previous primary and to add 25% more. He stated that the party chair has the option of requesting more ballots. He added that all those things are factored in to how much money the County will receive from the State.

Judge Hinojosa noted that he preferred to order more Ballots than were needed.

Ms. Rosie Sotello, Precinct Judge, noted the problem of cars with political signs parked right in front of the Courthouse, and suggested that the City should designate the area as a no parking area on Elections Day.

Mr. Hernandez noted that the Voting Booths currently used do not provide the privacy required.

Mr. Muñoz noted that the Elections Code provides that the back of the Stand-up Booth should have a minimum of 6 feet high.

The Elections Administrator noted that she requested a quote from a printer concerning the partition for the Voting Booth.

Mr. Vela suggested to ensure that the configuration of the voting area secures voter privacy and to make that part of the training for the Judges.

Mr. Muñoz noted that we have to go the extra mile to convince the voting public that there is absolutely no reason to be apprehensive of the safety and security of their vote. He added the need to increase voter confidence.

Mr. Vela remarked that the candidate should refrain from making accusations of tampering or fraud, right after an Elections.

Judge Hinojosa agreed with and noted that there may have been some sloppy security, but not a single piece of evidence was shown to indicate any tampering. He noted that systems are in place to prevent tampering from happening.

Mr. Hernandez noted a problem with the poll watchers not receiving information as it was being dispersed.

Judge Hinojosa suggested that the Elections Administrator research the law and bring him the recommendations to the Commission.

Mr. Vela reiterated the need to have a precinct by precinct count on Election night.

Mr. Hernandez expressed some concerns regarding the opening on the ballot boxes, and added that the Ballot boxes that Houston was using had the opening on top, as required by law.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was **ADJOURNED**.



APPROVED this 28th day of **April, 1998**.

ELECTIONS COMMISSION CHAIRPERSON

ATTEST:

**TAX ASSESSOR-COLLECTOR AND SECRETARY
OF THE ELECTIONS COMMISSION OF
CAMERON COUNTY, TEXAS.**

