

Analysis and Recommendations

Elections Division

Office of the City Clerk City of Minneapolis, Minnesota

Submitted to: Minneapolis City Council

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June 17, 2011

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TO: Minneapolis City Council
Barbara Johnson, Council President
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and Council Members

FR: Connie Schmidt, CERA
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Election Consulting Services

RE: Analysis and Recommendations
Elections Division, Office of the City Clerk

INTRODUCTION

Under contract with the City Clerk's Office, this consultant was retained to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the existing legal, policy, and regulatory requirements and operating structure of the Election Division of the Office of the City Clerk. Further, the contract requires a minimum of two alternative operating models: (1) Consolidation of all or a portion of election-related duties currently performed by the City of Minneapolis with the Hennepin County Elections Division; and (2) Retention of all election-related duties currently performed by the City of Minneapolis as a function of city government, including identification of improvements in service delivery, allocation of resources and other operational enhancements. The contract also provides an option for the consultant to present additional operating models, which may be a variation on the two models described above.

The analysis included the following components:

- Review laws, policies, regulations, and other documents that define and describe the existing operation of the Election Division of the Office of the City Clerk.
- Secure access to similar relevant documentation relating to the operation of the Hennepin County Taxpayers Department – Election Division.
- Interview a broad range of individuals to identify key issues, trends, expectations, objectives, and service delivery goals.
- Develop a profile of the City and the County Election Divisions.
- Identify benchmark jurisdictions for comparison purposes.

This report is divided into six sections, as follows:

- Overview and Methodology
- Elections in Minnesota
- Profiles of City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County Election Divisions
- Alternative Operating Models
- Summary
- Exhibits

Reader Cautionary Note: Any election office reviewed, including those in the top five percent, will have items that review teams find can be improved. Statements or recommendations in this report are not intended to be value judgments and should not be interpreted as analyzing the capabilities of the office or its staff. While this consultant does provide services to governments to evaluate complete office operations and procedures, that was not the intent of this study.

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OVERVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

The contract for the analysis was signed on May 2, 2011 and work began immediately. City election staff assisted with the collection of specified documents. A written questionnaire was developed to be used in personal interviews. Input was sought from within the city and county organizations, surrounding cities and counties within the State of Minnesota, the Secretary of State's Office, former and retired division and department managers, and Election Day field supervisors.

The consultant spent a total of 8 days on-site collecting and reviewing documents, touring city and surrounding county facilities, and conducting "walk-throughs" of various procedures and processes. Findings were documented and follow-up was conducted to establish benchmarks, and develop various modeling scenarios.

ASSISTANCE:

It should be noted that the City Clerk's Election Division staff were extremely helpful in providing documents, information, space and any other assistance needed to conduct the analysis. All individuals interviewed were cooperative, open and informative. This assistance made it possible to do this analysis while operating under extreme time constraints.

LIMITATIONS:

Studies of this nature require assistance from all agencies impacted by the project. Due to the short time frame and nature of the study, outcome was dependent upon the level of involvement and interaction with both primary agencies: (1) City Clerk's Election Division and (2) Hennepin County Taxpayers Department – Election Division. Therefore, the final analysis is limited to that level of participation by both agencies. It should be noted that the County staff was not able to provide details on how costs would be proportioned to the City of Minneapolis should elections be transferred to Hennepin County. They were, however, able to confirm that, should Minneapolis elections be transferred to the County they would utilize a competitive hiring practice to fill the required positions.

FORMAT:

The report is divided into six sections. The appendix contains a "Summary of Recommendations", some of which are noted in specific sections.

Elections in Minnesota

The cities are responsible for providing specialized election services to their residents. This model acknowledges that the local city staff understands the unique voting needs of their diverse population. As an example, the City of Minneapolis provides language support to voters by: 1) recruiting election judges who can translate; 2) providing paper copies of all election materials made available to the OSS; and 3) creating a web page that translates Minneapolis ballot questions into the three most common languages of the city, which can also be used by translation support provided through Minneapolis 311.

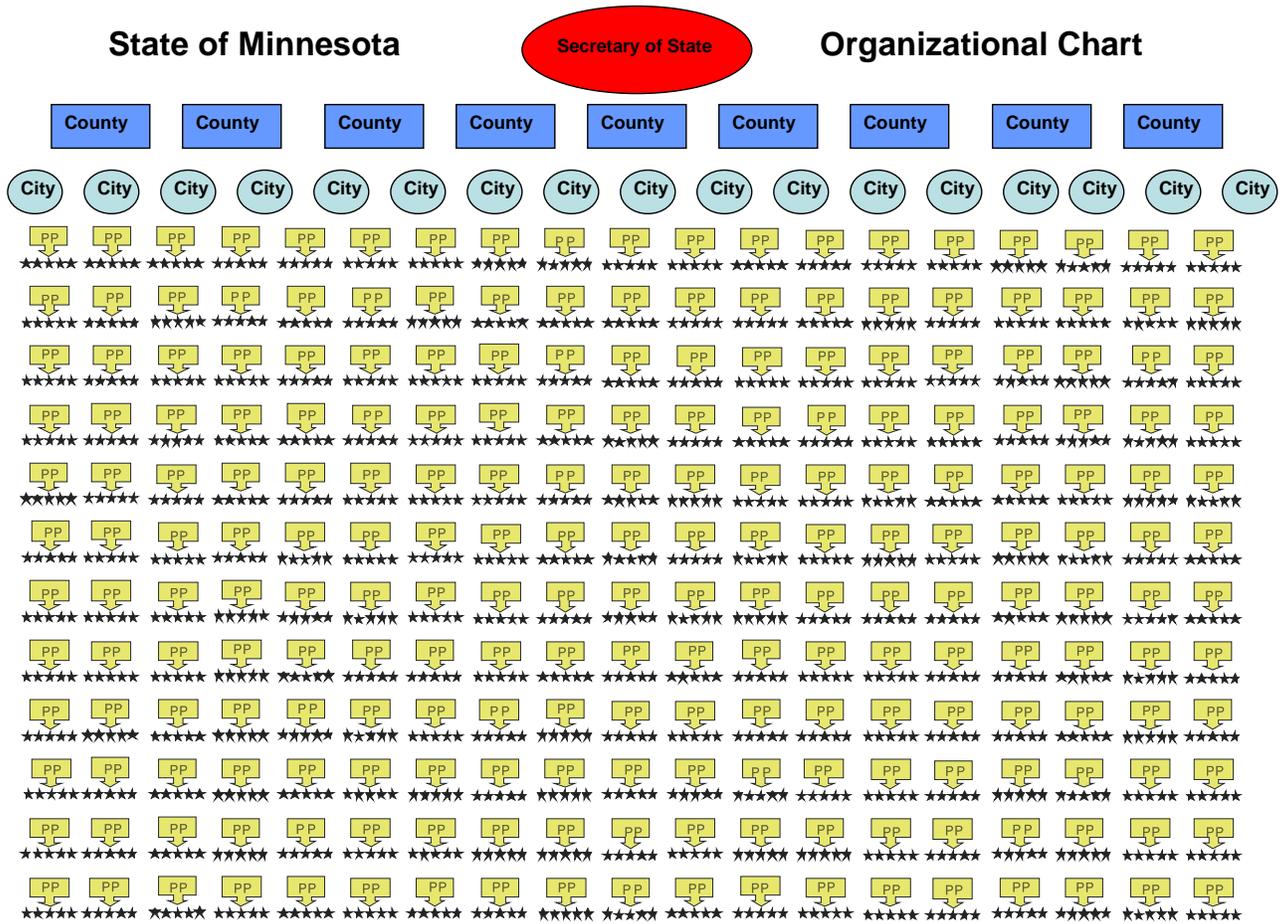
Each city also provides in-person absentee services to their residents at area City Halls. City staffs recruit, train and assign poll workers to work at polling places on Election Day. These workers have a strong community-based commitment to work in their city on Election Day. Many of these workers are long tenured poll workers who work on every election, not just for the dollars earned, but also because of the human factor and the “relationship” that has been nurtured between the election office staff and the poll workers.

In fact, managing elections nationwide is often compared to deploying an army. This service is truly the heart of democracy, where even the smallest error is considered unacceptable. The decentralized nature of elections in the United States is strengthened by the checks and balances inherent in the large number of workers that administer the process.

The infamous 2000 Presidential election produced a turnout of approximately one hundred million (100,000,000) voters. Voting for that election was managed at approximately two hundred thousand (200,000) polling places, which were staffed by approximately 1,400,000 poll workers. These individuals work just a few days a year for very long hours and there can be no mistakes. Indeed, the selection of polling places, recruitment, assignment, and training of poll workers is one of the most critical functions in election administration.

The chart below depicts the magnitude of managing Election Day activities. On that one day, Election Day, election offices across the country become the largest employer in their community. The chart provides a visual snapshot of the checks and balances that are in place. From the Secretary of State’s office...to the County offices...to the City offices...to the polling places and poll workers...to the voters, each part of the process is managed by professionals that have been trained to double check each step in the process. One excellent example in Hennepin County is ballot programming. National election standards speak often of the “two person” rule – everything proofed and proofed again by another set of eyes. Hennepin County election staff program all ballots for use countywide. These ballots are then proofed again at the city level. Once both sets of employees have signed off, ballots are ordered and memory cards are downloaded by the county staff and sent to the cities. The city staff is responsible for conducting logic and accuracy (L&A) testing on each voting

machine. This separation of duties and two person integrity of the ballot programming and voting machine testing is a testament to the county/city division of duties in the State of Minnesota.



Actual data for the State of Minnesota is as follows:

- Number of counties in Minnesota: 87
- Number of total precincts in Minnesota: 4,136
- Number of total precincts in Hennepin County: 425
- Number of total precincts in the City of Minneapolis: 131

Profiles of City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County Election Divisions

PROFILE OF ELECTION DIVISION, CITY CLERK'S OFFICE **CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS**

Statistical Profile

- The City of Minneapolis is the largest and most populated municipality in the state, with a population of 382,578. It ranks as the 48th largest city in the nation.
- The City has 225,154 registered voters and is the fourth largest jurisdiction in the State of Minnesota, based on registered voters (counties and cities). Registered voters in the City of Minneapolis is comparable to Ramsey County (292,014 registered voters) and Dakota County (237,479 registered voters).
- There are 131 precincts within the City, encompassing a total of 13 Wards.
- The City Clerk's Election Division has a total of 5 full time positions.
- The operating budget for 2010 was \$1,323,135.
- The City contracts with the School District Number 1 to manage their elections. The value of this contract is \$ 46,000.

History of the Division

In mid-1998 elected officials asked the city and county to research possible opportunities for creating efficiencies between the City and Hennepin County election offices. A redesign group was formed to evaluate existing work flow and to look for opportunities to create a more efficient city/county election function. The group researched a variety of models, including the St. Paul/Ramsey County model. Following 6 months of research and study, the group came to the following conclusions:

The following functions could be centralized in Hennepin County:

- Voter registration data entry functions (new registrations, updates to records, and voter history)

- Ballot printing contracts could be negotiated at the county level for all elections with potential cost savings for cities.
- Ballot layout could be done by Hennepin County for all elections.
- Hospital absentee voting
- Felony status updates and follow-up after an election

Functions that should remain with Minneapolis:

- Poll Workers – recruitment, hiring, training, scheduling
- Absentee Voting
- Polling Places and Supplies
- Trucking (drayage)
- Candidate filings and initial filing of Statement of Economic Interest forms

Additionally, this study group concluded that the only task performed by the City, which Hennepin County performed for all other cities and which it is required by State law to perform, was voter registration. That was the first area that was transferred back to the County in 2003.

Furthermore, the study group also concluded that there were no cases where the taxpayer was paying twice for the same service. Hennepin County election staff performed duties distinctly different from the cities.

Again, in June 2003 a meeting was held with Hennepin County to discuss the viability of merging or contracting all election-related functions with Hennepin County. As a result of that meeting a list of election tasks which included statutory sites for conducting those tasks, who was legally responsible for conducting the tasks, and estimated costs associated with each task was sent to Hennepin County to review. After reviewing the list, Hennepin County determined that there were no efficiencies to be gained by merging the two offices since the functions that the offices performed were entirely different. The County was not providing election services to any other city and would not have the resources to do so without charging the City of Minneapolis as Ramsey County does for the City of St. Paul. At that time, the County implied that charges to the City of Minneapolis would exceed current costs to perform those same functions.

Additionally the City of Minneapolis provides election services to Special School District Number 1 on a contractual basis. Providing this service to the School District is cost effective to the taxpayer because this is a function the City already provides. There are efficiencies to be gained in combining functions when an office already performs those functions. If Minneapolis did not perform election services, this revenue would be lost.

PROFILE OF ELECTION DIVISION HENNEPIN COUNTY TAXPAYERS DEPARTMENT

Statistical Profile

- Hennepin County is the largest of Minnesota's 87 counties, in terms of population, budget and estimated market value.
- The County has 46 cities or towns and 1 unincorporated area (Fort Snelling). There are 22 school districts that are either totally or partially located within the County.
- There are 698,367 total registered voters in the County, within 425 precincts.
- The Election Division has seven (7) full time employees
- The Election Division's 2010 Operating Budget was \$2,087,549

Overview of the Division

The Election Division is located within the Hennepin County Administration Building.

The facility is easily located with excellent directional signage for customers visiting the office. There is a large counter space, with computer connectivity for use during in-person absentee voting. There is also a large space available in front of the counter space for placement of voting booths around the perimeter of the room.

The County's Election Division provides the following services to all county voters:

- Voter Registration (SVRS)
- Administration of county-wide voting equipment contracts
- Monitor pending election legislation and lobby legislators
- Ballot programming for all Hennepin County jurisdictions
- Administration of county-wide printing contract for ballots and supplies

- Distribution of and processing of military and overseas absentee ballots
- Results accumulation services
- Maintain interactive website for Hennepin County election jurisdictions
- Train and certify city and school district election administrators

Alternative Operating Models

MODEL ONE:
TRANSFER CITY ELECTION DIVISION TO HENNEPIN COUNTY

Overview

The County Auditor's election division has expressed an interest in discussing the possible merger of the county and the city's election duties and responsibilities. Due to the time constraints of this report, the county has not been able to provide a detailed plan for managing the merger of these offices.

The County election staff has, however, indicated that it is their opinion that a merger of city/county resources would provide a stronger model of election administration. They believe that the outcome would result in better service for all stakeholders (voters, campaigns, cities, candidates, and Secretary of State's Office). The County election staff also projects that following completion of a contract with the City of Minneapolis that the County would be in a position to assume school district contracts in the odd election years, with an expected revenue estimate of \$75,000 - \$100,000 in odd years.

The City and the County would need to negotiate a contract agreement, defining roles and responsibilities and associated costs for assuming responsibility for the City of Minneapolis election services. The timing of any decision is critical as the next election (Presidential) is in November 2012.

Nationally, there are many different models for administering elections. In California, Charter cities conduct their own elections, i.e. City of Los Angeles and City of Long Beach. The counties in California also conduct elections, which are charged back to the local jurisdictions. In most instances, this is known to be a revenue source for the county election office. In many other states, the counties conduct all elections and absorb all costs associated with voter registration and election management services. In Missouri, the two large cities (Kansas City and St. Louis) maintain their own election offices. Those counties (Jackson and St. Louis) also have their own election offices. Both of these agencies conduct exactly the same services (voter registration and election management).

In Minnesota, Ramsey County has conducted elections for the City of St. Paul since 1994. The County's contract with the City of St. Paul provides that the City pays for a proportional share of Ramsey County's operating expenses associated with all voter registration/election administration services.

Potential Cost Savings and/or Additional Costs

Information provided by the Hennepin County election staff shows that they estimate there will be a need for an additional 3 full time employees to handle the additional workload. They acknowledge, however, that there would be modest, if any, cost savings by consolidation of these two agencies.

Identified Risks

Hennepin County election staff has also acknowledged that assuming responsibility for the City of Minneapolis elections has some risks:

- 1) Minneapolis has ranked choice voting for city races;
- 2) Minneapolis is a complex political entity with many competing interests;
- 3) Resource estimates need to be correct in order to maintain the county's mandated election responsibilities in addition to assuming Minneapolis duties; and
- 4) There is a narrow window of time to merge the two functions in time for the 2012 Presidential election activities.

This consultant agrees that making a major change of this nature leading into a Presidential election year is a considerable risk. This factor, along with redistricting and the city's unique RCV system are the major risks that have been identified.

It is also important to note that this would be Hennepin County's first contract to provide election services. Timing is critical given the fact that the County will be building the infrastructure to support Minneapolis elections from the ground up.

Additionally, the County has indicated that they will utilize a competitive hiring practice to fill necessary positions. The potential loss of the expertise and years of experience of existing City election staff members, along with the possible loss of tenured poll workers, is another risk factor that has been identified.

Finding

There is no duplication of services. The County and the City election offices manage different areas of responsibility. The City of Minneapolis would realize modest, if any, cost savings. Should the City choose to proceed with merger of these two offices, an alternative is to lobby for a change in State law to give responsibility for all voter registration and election administration to Hennepin County, at no cost to the City.

MODEL TWO: RETAIN CITY ELECTION DIVISION IN CITY CLERK'S OFFICE

Overview

The City Clerk's election division received very high ratings in all interviews conducted by this consultant. Specifically, they were praised for their efforts in:

- 1) Managing two highly visible recounts; and
- 2) Developing the procedures and processes for hand counting the city's rank choice voting election (conducted for the first time in 2009).

The City prides itself on how elections are managed and continues to look for cost savings in the election division. The fact that there is an "election office" at Hennepin County and an "election office" in the City Clerk's Office creates a perception that there is a duplication of service, and that consolidation of these two offices would result in cost savings.

The County's election office has a primary responsibility for Voter Registration and the City Clerk's election division has a primary responsibility for Election Administration. Both offices work as a team, in conjunction with the Secretary of State's Election Division.

The City Clerk's election division has been in transition, since the resignation of their full-time Director. That was followed by a contract employee who managed the transition to ranked choice voting, following by an interim director who resigned in March 2011 and was hired by the County election office. The division has five full time positions, two of which are currently vacant and one of those positions is the director. That said, the existing three full time staff members have over 50 years of experience in election management. Two of these employees are Certified Election Registration Administrators (CERA); and one employee has attained the Minnesota Certified Municipal Clerk status. Collectively these three employees hold a total of four bachelors degrees.

The City operates a 311 call center which provides excellent service to voters on Election Day, resulting in efficiencies in management of the peak in phone calls that occurs on Election Day.

The City has invested in the development of election management software that provides efficiencies in recruiting, scheduling, and training of poll workers; and management of polling place information and supply delivery. This software is

owned by the city and continues to be enhanced based on new election management requirements and staff innovations.

The City currently maintains a contract with the school district to conduct their election. The value of this contract is \$46,000.

Potential Cost Savings

In addition to existing cost savings initiatives implemented by staff, the following potential cost savings have been identified:

- Voter Registration PVC (postal verification card) postage costs are the responsibility of the “office required to perform the function” (201.211). The County Auditor has the responsibility for voter registration. City records indicate that the County has billed the City of Minneapolis for these costs for at least the last 3 years as follows:
 - \$15,405.09 (2008 costs)
 - \$22,996.97 (2009 costs)
 - \$15,987.63 (2010 costs)

TOTAL PAID IN 2008-2010 = \$54,389.69

Estimated annual cost savings is approximately \$15-20,000.

- Relocate election division office staff to existing City Clerk’s office space. This provides a better overall utilization of all City Clerk staff and consolidates space needs in one area.
- Identify space needs and work with city officials to locate more cost-effective warehousing space and training facilities. Potential cost savings: unknown at this time.
- Renegotiate the 2006 lease agreement with Hennepin County for voting equipment. This agreement replaced the 2000 lease agreement by including the ATV AutoMark Terminals. The 2000 agreement included the M100 Optical Scan equipment and provided that the County would be responsible for programming at no charge for all races in all elections. The 2006 agreement **added programming costs** for the AVT Equipment at an amount prorated upon the number of columns devoted to the City’s races on the ballot. The County’s initial agreement with the City provided for programming at no charge for all races in all elections. This should apply to all of the voting equipment owned by the County.

- Consolidation of precincts, based on number of registered voters per precinct. There are currently two precincts with less than 400 voters, and another 12 precincts ranging in size from 400 – 1,000 voters. Consolidation of 12-14 precincts provides an estimated cost savings of \$16-18,000.

Finding

There is no duplication of services. The County and the City election offices manage different areas of responsibility.

The City has paid the County's postage costs for mailing of PVC to voters in Minneapolis. State law assigns the responsibility for costs associated with voter registration to the office required to perform that function. The City is not statutorily required to pay these charges.

MODEL THREE: STRENGTHENING EXISTING CITY/COUNTY PARTNERSHIP

Overview

The election offices of Hennepin County and the City of Minneapolis manage different aspects of the voter registration/election administration process. The County's primary responsibility is voter registration and the City's primary responsibility is election administration. This allows each office to work independently to manage their operations. During peak election cycles the two offices intertwine to work together as a larger team.

Over the past year the partnership has been enhanced with a renewed focus on building a better service delivery model. The County Auditor and county election staff are to be commended for these efforts. The Minneapolis City Clerk and city election staff applaud these efforts and look forward to new initiatives that can provide more efficient and cost-effective services to all residents.

One example of a new partnership that was initiated by the County's election manager was the centralization of the November 2010 recount. Under the County's umbrella, all cities worked together in one location to manage the recount. This is an excellent example of creativity and innovation. The city and county staffs worked as supervisors of the recount and also pooled their resources to recruit the necessary line staff to conduct the recount. The process was enhanced through these efforts by: 1) one central recount location; 2) one contact person for candidates and media; 3) centralized security of ballots; and 4) uniform recount procedures. The level of scrutiny and media attention of a recount is one area in elections that can be enhanced by utilizing resources and election expertise from all jurisdictions in the county.

Another example of a new partnership between the City of Minneapolis and Hennepin County is the tabulation of absentee ballots. The County recognized the need for a central ballot tabulation counter and took the initiative to rent the equipment. The city's ability to utilize this central tabulation counter streamlined the counting of absentee ballots for the City of Minneapolis. Again, this is another example of a renewed effort on the part of the County Auditor's election staff to partner with the cities to provide election administration.

Brief History

Voter registration was transferred to the county in 2003 and the City of Minneapolis eliminated 2.5 positions. This transfer of duties to the County was done at no cost to the City of Minneapolis.

The two agencies work together as a team. Examples include:

- 1) In 2000 Hennepin County purchased new voting equipment and contracts with the cities to pay for warehousing and annual maintenance fees;
- 2) The Minnesota SOS trains county election administrators and the county trains the city election staff, with city staff training all Election Day poll workers;
- 3) The County designs and prints ballots for the entire county and the city staff does all of the individual testing of each ballot counter to prove the accuracy of the equipment (L&A testing);
- 4) Absentee voting responsibilities are shared with the county managing the military and overseas absentee voting. Both offices provide in-person absentee voting and the city manages all absentee by mail and the 30 health care facilities and four hospitals.
- 5) Purchasing requests are centralized at the County for envelopes, ballots, etc.

Possible New Partnerships

The use of technology in elections can provide better service and may reduce costs. Nationwide election offices are turning to online innovations to supplement their operations. Several of these initiatives, if implemented by the County, would provide consistency and better service to all election offices in the County. The following are included in this report for possible future consideration:

- 1) On line poll worker refresher training. This on line tool provides poll workers the ability to test and refresh their knowledge of Election Day procedures at any time and on any day. Tenured poll workers could complete this training at their convenience, possibly eliminating the need for an additional in-person training session. An added benefit is that poll workers could review the training any time before Election Day. Again, this technology would be more cost-effective to all jurisdictions if it is hosted by the County.

- 2) Absentee ballot tracking on line tools. This technology is a growing trend and allows voters to use a web-based resource to verify that their voted absentee mail ballot has been delivered to the election office. Again, this is an example of the use of technology, hosted by the County, and utilized by all election jurisdictions.
- 3) Centralized warehousing. Operating under the umbrella of the county, surrounding cities may benefit from pooling their resources for warehousing costs of voting equipment. Centralizing this activity could provide for the utilization of a pool of experienced city staff to conduct logic and accuracy testing prior to each election. NOTE: The location of the warehouse is a key factor, especially relating to travel time and delivery schedules for transporting equipment to and from polling places.
- 4) Voter Outreach and Education. City and County election staff should continue to build on their renewed partnership to pool resources for development and distribution of voter registration and voter education tools. Again, this is an area that would benefit from a joint effort, utilizing the knowledge and expertise of existing staff from all jurisdictions in Hennepin County.

Finding

The duties of the county and the city election offices are different and unique. There is no duplication of services. During peak election periods, the two offices work together to utilize the knowledge and expertise of all staff to provide voter registration and election services.

Recommendation:

Hennepin County and the City of Minneapolis should develop a Memorandum of Understanding detailing all specific areas of responsibility and partnership roles. Any cost sharing agreements should be referenced in the Memorandum of Understanding.

Summary

SUMMARY

This analysis was completed within a compressed schedule of less than six weeks. This consultant was on site in Minneapolis for 8 days, conducting interviews and touring various facilities. Given the short timeframe of this analysis, I sincerely appreciate the responsiveness of all individuals that were interviewed, with special thanks to the staff of the City's and County's election divisions.

This topic has been discussed and debated several times since the mid 1990's. Because the City of St. Paul initially contracted with Ramsey County to manage all election services in 1994 that consolidation model has been studied by several different groups to determine if it would be effective for Hennepin County/City of Minneapolis elections.

It is important to note that in elections it is a fact that "one size doesn't fit all". Nationwide, various states and jurisdictions have implemented "all mail ballot" voting; no excuse early voting; voter ID; and vote centers. Some jurisdictions purchased touchscreen voting machines while others purchased optical scanners. What works for one state or city may or may not work in another.

The outcome of the interview process for this analysis was that the City of Minneapolis election division received very high marks for management of election administration. On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being excellent, the election division consistently scored between 8.5 and 10. Any change in the service delivery model must not compromise this high level of performance.

The interviews also showed that there is a perception that some of the same services are provided by the City and County election offices, and therefore, the two offices should merge to eliminate any duplication of services. ***This analysis, once again, verified that there is no duplication of services.*** Each office has specific responsibilities – the county is responsible for all voter registration; and the city is responsible for providing all election administration services to voters. During election periods, the two offices work in tandem to check and double check ballots, program memory cards and perform voting equipment logic and accuracy testing.

Recently, at the county's initiative, this partnership has grown to the next level. An excellent example of the county/cities renewed partnership is the November 2010 recount, which was managed by all election agencies, but coordinated through the county election office. This report contains additional ideas for

continued partnership and joint efforts that would utilize the expertise of existing staff to better service the voting public.

Another consistent area discussed in the interview process was cost savings. Minneapolis, like all other local government agencies nationwide, is searching for ways to cut budget dollars, while still providing excellent customer service. Elections are a government service that is often analyzed in search of cost savings.

Unfortunately, the nature of the business of elections creates another perception – “What do you do when it’s not Election Day?” Unfortunately, most people only see the visible part of elections – their neighborhood polling place operation on Election Day. However, behind the scenes in election offices, staff works very long hours for months leading up to Election Day. In fact, the actual strategic planning for a major election begins 12-14 months in advance of Election Day. Administering an election requires developing a strategic long term plan, coordination and implementation of multiple processes under tight timelines with no margin of error.

Concerns regarding a possible transfer of the city’s elections office to the county were also discussed during the interviews. Election offices typically make it a rule not to change any systems, processes or procedures close to an election and instead try to install and implement changes when there is sufficient time to plan and test for any unexpected problems. Transferring city election administration to the county prior to the 2012 Presidential election has been identified as a risk by this consultant and city/county election staff. Other cities in Hennepin County have also expressed concern that this transfer could impact the County’s delivery of service to all other city election offices.

Based on benchmark comparisons of how elections are managed in other states and jurisdictions, Hennepin County is similar to other large metropolitan counties in that there is one very large city (Minneapolis), and numerous other smaller cities. In those cases, the one large city is actually comparable in size and complexity to another county and, therefore, that large city manages its own standalone election services operation, with the county providing election services to its remaining jurisdictions. It is important to note that when all data for counties and cities in the State of Minnesota are grouped together, the City of Minneapolis is the fourth largest jurisdiction among all other counties and cities.

Another interview question focused on possible areas of improvements. Merging of responsibilities relating to voter outreach was mentioned. This is an area that would benefit from joint efforts by all city/county election offices, resulting in a uniform message to all voters in Hennepin County.

Finally, to summarize the interview process, I would like to quote Ramsey County election manager Joe Mansky’s response to one of the interview questions: “It is

my philosophy that the primary basis for any agreement to transfer election services should be based on the need to improve operations, and not based on cost”.

Future Needs:

The process of election administration has, in the past decade, become more and more dependent on technology. Voting equipment, election management processes such as ballot layout and mapping, and other processes are no longer manual in nature. In addition, technology has completely changed the landscape of the public’s expectation for “customer service”. In particular, the Internet has become a primary source for public agencies to provide information to the public, as well as for the public to conduct business with those agencies. The Secretary of State, County, and City election divisions maintain web sites for voter services. Future innovations include on-line poll worker training, absentee ballot tracking, and the growing trend nationwide towards on-line voter registration.

The City’s immediate need relates to the purchase of RCV-capable voting equipment. This equipment can solve existing issues, specifically;

- 1) The AutoMARK (assistive voting device) cannot prevent voters from making errors specific to RCV;
- 2) The Ballot Counter cannot notify voters of errors specific to RCV so that the voter can receive a new ballot to use; and
- 3) The 2009 election had to be hand-counted, at additional cost to the City of Minneapolis.

The City election staff, in partnership with the Secretary of State, Hennepin County and other counties in the State of Minnesota, should join arms to work cooperatively to develop required RFP specifications. There can be significant cost savings to all jurisdictions (cities and counties) through a joint effort to purchase new equipment. This includes the initial purchase cost, future maintenance and parts/supplies.

Additionally, the City’s Election Director position has remained vacant since mid 2009. In the past this position was filled by two different interim directors. During this period of time, the tenured city staff has been the foundation of the election division. The current three staff members have worked together as a solid team to manage three “mission-critical” events:

- 1) The Senate recount of 2008;
- 2) Implementation of Rank Choice Voting in 2009; and

3) The Governor recount of 2010.

There is one other full time position that is also vacant. Now is an opportune time to evaluate the scope of these two vacant positions, and hire individuals with skill sets and election expertise to manage the operations into the future. Again, there is an immediate need to hire these positions within the next 90 days.

Additional Recommendations:

- The City election office should continue to build on their renewed partnership with the County election office, to include other city offices in Hennepin County. Those efforts should be based on continuing to develop and foster a “voter friendly” environment.
- Conduct a Business Process Analysis (BPA). A BPA provides a comprehensive review of overall operations. The purpose of a BPA is to determine whether the division is operating efficiently and effectively, and to identify ways in which operations could be improved.
- Making decisions regarding voting systems, relocating office environment, implementation and automation of new office functions would be aided by the use of a strategic plan enumerating the vision and goals of the division. The City Clerk’s election division, perhaps in conjunction with a trained facilitator, should develop a strategic plan developing a vision for the next 3 to 5 years.

Exhibits

Benchmark Comparisons

The following jurisdictions were contacted in an effort to collect comparable statistics. It should be noted that currently there are no national benchmarking standards for elections. The national organization for election administrators, The Election Center, Inc., has recently established a committee that is currently working on the development of benchmarks for management of elections.

Ramsey County/City of St. Paul, Minnesota

- 2011-2012 biennium budget is \$2,714,808
- Existing contracts for election services: City of St. Paul, City of Falcon Heights, St. Paul Public Schools, Mounds View Public Schools and Roseville Area Schools. NOTE: Ramsey County has conducted elections for the City of St. Paul and ISD 625 since 1994. A contract for elections for ISD 621 and 623 was implemented in 2009; and the City of Falcon Heights in 2010.
- Joint powers agreement with all 19 municipalities for operation/maintenance of voting system.
- City of St. Paul contract cost for election services for 2009-2010 is \$1,563,000. The cost for future contract years is adjusted based on: 1) estimated voter turnout; 2) labor contracts and agreements for non-represented employees approved by the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners; 3) changes in the CPI for the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area, as determined by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics for the previous two-year period; 4) changes in State, Federal, County, City or School District legal requirements; and 5) other factors having a significant impact on election costs. NOTE: This is a 4 year contract, with 2011-2012 costs provided to the City no later than April 1, 2010.
- Staff: 7 full time staff with an additional 2-4 college interns and up to 12 seasonal staff members. NOTE: If the City of St. Paul contract for election services was cancelled, the Ramsey County election office's remaining budget would provide funding for only 1 ½ positions, clearly

indicating that this contract is a revenue source for the county, specifically providing funding to the county to support the county's mandated voter registration duties.

City of Duluth, Minnesota

- Registered Voters: 54,563
- Staff: 5 full time staff members; plus a few part time during election mode
- Election budget ranges from \$70-90,000

City of Long Beach, California

- Registered Voters: 244,117
- 387 precincts
- The budget for the 2010 Primary election was \$1,482,000
- Staff: 5 full time employees, during election mode an additional 5 temporary staff
- Long Beach is a Charter City and conducts its own elections

Platte County, Missouri

- 61,304 registered voters
- 44 precincts with 28 polling places
- 2010 operating budget: \$683,886
- Staff: 6 full time staff, and 1 part time staff member

- The City of Kansas City, Missouri (and Jackson County, Missouri) and the City of St. Louis, Missouri (and St. Louis County, Missouri) have separate election boards, established by state statute. The City election boards are able to focus on the larger City elections, allowing the County election boards to focus on the other smaller cities/villages in their jurisdiction.
- **IMPORTANT NOTE:** In 2010 the Jackson County Legislature hired an outside firm to evaluate both the Kansas City, Missouri and Jackson County, Missouri Election Boards to determine if they could be combined to save money. The outside firm was not able to conclude that there would be any significant cost savings to combine the two Boards.

City of Rochester, Minnesota

- Registered Voters: 58,977
- Staff: 6 full time staff members, plus one temporary during election mode
- Budget for state and federal elections: approximately \$160,000
- The City of Rochester (58,977) has a Cooperative Agreement with Olmsted County (82,215 voters) that documents the shared responsibilities of each agency:

City of Rochester duties

Polling Places within all voting precincts

Recruit and hire poll workers (approx. 350-400)

Runs all aspects for special City Elections (Ballot programming and preparation; absentee ballots, poll worker training, etc.)

Olmsted County – (countywide)

Ballot programming

Voter registration

Absentee ballot precinct

Poll Worker training

Equipment purchase and training

Equipment technician retention

- **NOTE:** Olmsted County does NOT charge the City of Rochester for the programming, training, etc.; and the City of Rochester does NOT charge Olmsted County for election judges or precinct costs within the City. The school district is charged 1/3 of the City's cost within the City for those two functions.

Sacramento County, California

- Registered Voters: 674,198
- Staff: 38 full time; during peak workload periods staffing is supplemented from temporary agencies, county temporary works and poll workers
- Budget: FY 2008/2009 = \$8,324,061; FY 2010/2011 = \$5,943,980
- 1,746 precincts, 500 voting precincts, 2,500 poll workers
- California state law allows cities to conduct their own elections. Cities in Sacramento County have requested Sacramento County to conduct their elections except for candidate filing activities, which are provided by the City Clerk's. This model works well in Sacramento County; however it is managed differently in other counties.
- Cities are billed for election services by the County. Sacramento County does recoup general overhead costs associated with election administration. The County cannot charge more than the costs to provide the service, however, they can include overhead in the "cost to provide service". Generally they determine a cost per registered voter and that amount is charged to each local district with a contest on the ballot. That cost is only charged to the districts whose contest makes it to the ballot. Each local district also pays a "setup" fee that covers the cost of setting up the election, public notices, and candidate services. This cost is charged to all districts regardless of whether the contest makes it to the ballot or not. Sacramento County's fee schedule is posted on their website at: www.elections.caccounty.net

City of Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Registered Voters: 312,000

Precincts and polling places: 312 precincts; 183 polling places

Number of Poll Workers: 1,500 – 1,800

Budget: 2008 Actual - \$2,710,209; 2010 Adopted - \$2,064,779

Staff: 6 full time with 1 vacancy; 25 part time during election cycles

The City of Milwaukee Election Office is responsible for all aspects of voter registration and election administration.

In Wisconsin municipalities run their own elections. The county clerks in some municipalities programs elections. It varies depending on the size of the county.

Interviews and Tours

Interviews

Mayor, City of Minneapolis
Council members, City of Minneapolis
City Coordinator
City Clerk
City Clerk, Election Division staff
City Attorney
City Financial Officer
Secretary of State, Election Division staff
Hennepin County Auditor
Hennepin County Auditor, Election Division staff
Former City Clerks
Former Hennepin County Auditor
City of St. Paul City Clerk
Ramsey County Election Director
Anoka County Election Director
City of Bloomington City Clerk
City of Edina City Clerk
Election Day Field Supervisor

Tours

Ramsey County Election Office
Anoka County Election Office
Hennepin County Election Office
City of Minneapolis Election Office, Warehouse, and Training Room

City of Minneapolis, Minnesota
Analysis of Elections Division, Office of the City Clerk

Interview Questions – Members of the Governing Body

1. Have there been issues and/or complaints regarding the City's management of elections? If yes, can you provide specifics on those issues?
2. Has the City previously discussed transferring election responsibility to the County? If yes, when did those discussions take place?
3. Please rate the City's management of elections on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being "excellent".
4. What are the top three things that you would like to change regarding the management of elections?
5. What are the top three things that concern you regarding the possible transfer of elections to Hennepin County?
6. What is your vision of the city/county election partnership into the future?
7. What ideas do you have for improvement of the existing operation?
8. In your own words, please explain why you do (or do not) want to transfer all election responsibility to Hennepin County.
9. Please provide any additional comments, concerns, suggestions or ideas, which you feel are important – whether they relate to the questions above or something new.