

Analysis and Recommendations

Elections Division
Office of the City Clerk

City Council Elections Committee

June 15, 2011

Report Sections

- Elections in Minnesota.
- Profile of City of Minneapolis Election Division.
- Profile of Hennepin County Election Division.
- Alternative Operating Models:
 - Transfer to Hennepin County;
 - Retain in Minneapolis; or
 - City/County Partnership.
- Summary.

Elections in Minnesota

- Decentralized management of elections.
- County auditor offices provide standardized services, i.e. voter registration, ballot programming, countywide contracts, and training of city/school election administrators.
- City Clerk offices provide specialized services to their residents, i.e. polling place management, poll worker recruitment and training, absentee voting, in-person and by mail.
- County and City staff have different duties, which is a model of the “two-person” integrity rule in administering elections.

**Minnesota
Secretary of State**

Chief election official of the state
Through rule-making develops procedures and forms to administer elections
Creates and maintains State-Wide Voter System (SVRS)
Trains County Auditors in conduct of state elections
Creates materials for standardization of election administration
Develops legislative reforms, monitors other pending legislation, provides testimony to legislature
Receives candidate filing, conducts state canvass, certifies voting systems
Leads Post-election Audit and Review



**Hennepin County
Auditor**

•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



**Minneapolis
City Clerk**

•Ballot Proofing and quantity ordering
•Logic and Accuracy Testing (voting equipment)
•Warehousing of voting equipment
•Redistricting of local lines
•Candidate filings - city offices and school board
•Polling place - ADA accessibility - selection & mgmt.
•Absentee voting - by mail and in person and health care
•Poll Workers - recruitment, training, assignment, evaluation, payroll
•Polling Place supplies - preparation and delivery
•Voting Equipment delivery
•Election Day support
•Election night ballot and supply return
•Post-election audit
•Recounts (as requested)
•School district elections (by contract with school district)
•Monitor pending election legislation and lobby legislators

**Standardized
functions**

**Specialized
Community-based
Services**

Polling Places

Polling Places

Polling Places

Polling Places

Polling Places



Voters

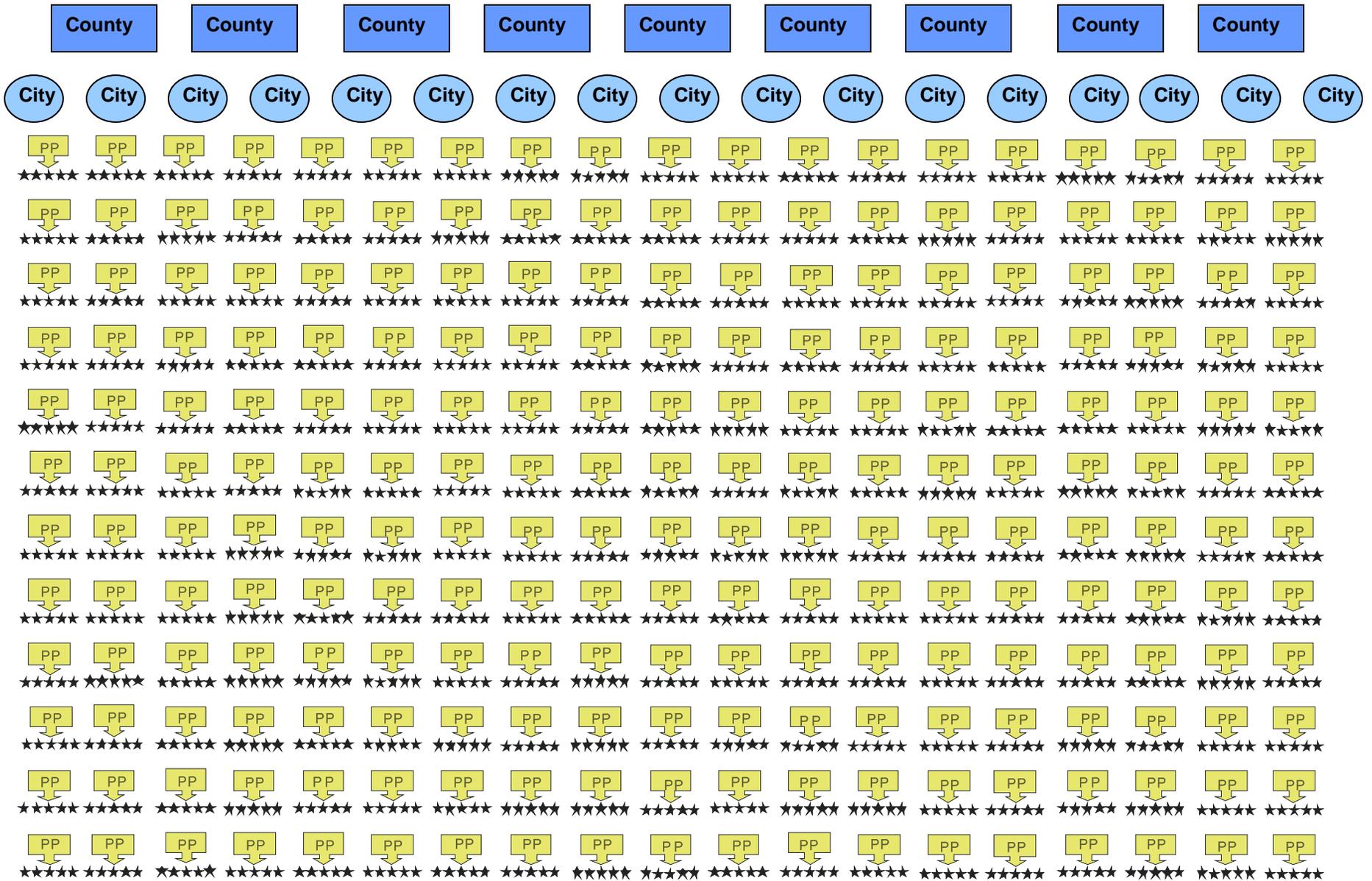
Managing Election Day

- Presidential election nationwide estimates:
 - 100,000,000 voters;
 - 200,000 polling places;
 - 1,400,000 poll workers.
- Minnesota has 87 counties with 4,136 precincts.
- Hennepin County has 425 precincts.
- City of Minneapolis has 131 precincts, managed by approximately 2,000 poll workers.
- Comparable to deployment of an army – the smallest of an error is unacceptable.

State of Minnesota



Organizational Chart



Profile of City of Minneapolis City Clerks' Election Division

- Registered voters: 225,154.
- Staff: 5 full time positions.
- 2010 budget: \$1,323,135.
- City contracts with School Dist #1 to manage their elections. Value of contract: \$46,000.
- Studies were done in 1998 and 2003:
 - No duplication of services;
 - No efficiencies gained by merging offices; and
 - Only task performed by both offices was voter registration – it was transferred back to Hennepin County in 2003

Profile of Election Division Hennepin County Taxpayers Dept.

- Registered voters: 698,367.
- Staff: 7 full time positions.
- 2010 budget: \$2,087,549.
- Largest of Minnesota's 87 counties.
- 46 cities; 22 school districts; 1 township;
1 unincorporated area (Fort Snelling).

Statistical Comparisons

- Hennepin County
 - Reg. Voters: 698,367
 - Precincts: 425
 - Cities: 45 (1 unincorporated; 1 township)
 - School Districts: 22
- City of Minneapolis
 - Reg. Voters: 225,154
 - Precincts: 131
- Ramsey County
 - Reg. Voters: 292,014
 - Precincts: 178
 - Cities: 17 (1 township)
 - School Districts: 6
- City of St. Paul
 - Reg. Voters: 157,859
 - Precincts: 104

Alternative Operating Models

Transfer City Elections to County

- No information on how costs would be proportioned to the City of Minneapolis.
- County anticipates the need for 3 new positions, which would be filled utilizing a competitive hiring practice.
- Time constraints of this report limited the County's ability to provide a detailed merger plan for the two offices.

Transfer to County - Risks

- City of Minneapolis has ranked choice voting for city races.
- Minneapolis is a complex political entity with many competing interests.
- There is concern about resource estimates in order to maintain county's mandated responsibilities in addition to Minneapolis duties.
- A narrow window of time to merge offices prior to the 2012 Presidential election activities.
- The County must build infrastructure to support Minneapolis elections from the ground up.
- A potential loss of expertise – city election staff and tenured poll workers.

Finding – Transfer to County

- There is no duplication of services.
- City of Minneapolis would realize modest, if any, cost savings.
- Alternative would be to lobby for a change in State law transferring all responsibility for voter registration and election administration to Hennepin County at no cost to the City of Minneapolis.

Retain Election Division in City Clerk's Office

- County has responsibility for Voter Registration; City has responsibility for Election Administration.
- Election division staff received very high ratings and were praised for their efforts in:
 - Managing two highly visible recounts; and
 - Developing the procedures and processes for hand counting the city's rank choice voting election.

Existing City Operation

- City's election office has 5 full time positions – 2 are vacant and 1 of those is the Director position.
 - Existing 3 staff members have over 50 years of experience in election administration; 2 of these employees are CERA certified; 1 is certified as Minnesota CMC.
- City of Minneapolis operates a 311 call center, which provides service to voters, including language translation needs.
- City election office is a leader in innovation and has a significant investment in the development of election management software.
 - Used as a model for development of State's absentee module;
 - Used as the model for recently developed software purchased by Anoka County. Anoka County has requested Minneapolis election staff to support and train Anoka County staff in the use of the poll worker module of this software.
- City contracts with the school district to conduct their election. Contract value: \$46,000.

Potential Cost Savings

- Postage costs for voter registration PVC.
Estimated annual cost savings: \$15-20,000.
- Combine election office within existing City Clerk's office. Better use of space and staffing.
- Relocate warehousing, training, and records storage to more cost-effective facility.
- Renegotiate 2006 lease agreement with Hennepin County to eliminate added programming costs for the ATV AutoMark terminals.
- Consolidation of precincts: cost savings for consolidating 12-14 precincts is estimated to be \$16-18,000.

Finding – Retain Elections at City

- No duplication of services.
- Modest, if any, cost savings.
- City has paid County's postage costs for mailing of voter registration PVC's. State law assigns the responsibility of costs associated with voter registration to the office required to perform that function. The City of Minneapolis is not statutorily required to pay these charges.

City/County Partnership Model – Existing Highlights

- Voter registration was transferred back to County; City eliminated 2.5 staff positions.
- County purchased voting equipment; cities pay for warehousing and maintenance costs.
- County provides ballot programming for entire county; cities conduct L&A testing.
- Both offices provide in-person absentee voting services.
- Purchasing requests are centralized at the County for envelopes, ballots, etc.

City/County Partnership Model

- Recent renewed partnership highlights:
 - Centralization of 2010 recount, resulting in
 - One central recount location for all cities in Hennepin County;
 - One contact person for candidates and media;
 - Centralized security of all voted ballots; and
 - Uniform recount procedures.
 - Central tabulation of all in-person and by mail absentee ballots.

Possible New City/County Partnerships

- On-line poll worker refresher training.
- Enhanced use of web-based services.
- Centralized warehousing.
- Voter outreach and education.

Finding – City/County Partnership

- During peak election periods, the two offices work together to utilize the knowledge and experience of all staff to provide voter registration and election administration.
- There is no duplication of services.
- Hennepin County and the City of Minneapolis should develop a Memorandum of Understanding detailing cost sharing, partnerships, and areas of responsibility.

Summary

- In elections, “one size doesn’t fit all”. What works for one state, county, or city may not work in another.
- Any change in the service delivery model for elections in Minneapolis must not compromise the existing high level of performance.
- Again, there is no duplication of services. Each office works in tandem with the other to check and double check ballots, program memory cards and perform voting equipment L&A testing.

Summary

- The city/county partnership has continued to grow. Additional ideas have been suggested.
- Risks were identified by city/county staff:
 - Time constraints and the approaching 2012 Presidential election;
 - Level of resources at the county for continued support to all other cities in the county.
- *“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”.* (Joe Mansky, Ramsey County election manager)

Future Needs

- New voting equipment.
- Fill vacant positions.
- Continue to build on renewed partnership with Hennepin County election office.
- Conduct a Business Process Analysis (BPA).
- Develop a strategic plan with a vision for the next 3-5 years.

**Questions and/or
Comments???**