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CENTRAL COUNT STATION PLAN

A. PURPOSE:

Section 127.001 of the Texas Election Code ("TEC") allows for the establishment of one or more Central Count Stations ("CCS"). Section 127.007 of the TEC requires the Manager of the CCS to "establish and implement a written plan for the orderly operation of the central counting station." The required plan under this section must be available to the public no later than 5:00 p.m. on the fifth day before election day.

B. LOCATION:

Uvalde County Central Counting Station is located at the Elections Administration Building, 124 E North St, Uvalde TX 78801. The CCS will be in the Elections Administration Work/Classroom. Entry will be through the East glass doors marked for "Employees Only".

C. CENTRAL COUNT STATION PERSONNEL:

The following are the roles and responsibilities inside the CCS, as contained in Sections 127.002-127.006 of the Texas Election Code:

- The Elections Administrator will serve as the CCS Manager to manage the overall administration of the station and supervision of personnel.
- The Deputy Election Administrator will serve as the Asst. CCS Manager to assist the CCS Manager as needed.
- The Elections Administrator will serve as the Tabulation Supervisor to operate the automatic tabulating equipment.
- The Deputy Election Administrator will serve as the Assistant Tabulation Supervisor to assist the Tabulation Supervisor to operate the automatic tabulation equipment as needed.
- The Presiding Judge of the CCS will serve to maintain order at the CCS, administer oaths to other CCS personnel, and receive equipment/ballot boxes for tabulation.
- The Alternate Judge of the CCS will serve in the capacity of the Presiding Judge in the event that the Presiding Judge is not present or available.
- Appointment of CCS Clerks can occur, as needed, by the CCS Manager.
- All CCS personnel must meet the requirements as set forth by Chapter 127 of the Texas Election Code.

D. TESTING PROCEDURES:

Section 127.091 establishes the required testing of the automatic tabulating used for counting ballots at a CCS.

1. Logic & Accuracy Test 1:
    a. Conduct of test by the custodian of the automatic tabulating equipment shall publish notice of the date, hours, and place of the test conducted under Section 127.093 (b) in a newspaper at least 48 hours before the date of the test.
    b. When conducting a test for a primary election, the custodian of the tabulating equipment must notify the county chair at least 48 hours in advance of the test.
    c. The test is open to the public.
    d. The automatic tabulating equipment may not be used to count ballots voted in an elections until a test is successful.
    e. On completing each of the Logic & Accuracy tests, the Presiding Judge shall place the test ballots and other test materials in a container provided for that purpose and seal the container so it cannot be opened without breaking the seal. The test materials shall remain sealed for the period for preserving the precinct election records.
    f. The container may not be unsealed unless the contents are necessary to conduct a test under Section 127 of the Texas Election Code or other official proceeding under this code.
2. Logic & Accuracy Test 2:
    a. The second Logic & Accuracy test must be performed immediately before beginning to tabulate the election returns.
    b. If the initial test was unsuccessful, the Presiding Judge shall prepare a written record of the changes to the program, adjustments to the equipment, and other actions taken to achieve a successful test. The record shall be retained with the rest of the materials.
    c. When a test is successful, the presiding judge shall certify in writing that a test was successful and the date and hour the test was completed. The certification shall be retained with the test materials.
3. Logic & Accuracy Test 3:
    a. The third Logic & Accuracy test must be performed immediately after the completion of tabulating the election returns.
    b. The automatic count of ballots voted in the election is valid for certifying the election returns prepared at the CCS if a successful test is completed.

E. PROCEDURES FOR CONVENING THE CENTRAL COUNT STATION:

Section 87.0241 of the Texas Election Code dictates when an entity may convene to count ballots. The CCS will not be convened until after the polls open on Election Day. For most elections, the CCS will convene at 6:00 p.m. on Election Day.

F. GENERAL CONDUCT RULES

All food and drink will be consumed and kept in the employee break room. At no time will liquids be near election equipment or paper ballots. No Cell phones or other recording devices maybe used at any time. A Uvalde County Sheriff's deputy will be on-site providing security for the CCS. Any disruption to the process of counting ballots

G. ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS:

Section 127.0015 of the Texas Election Code prescribes a required oath for all CCS personnel. The administration of oaths must take place prior to those individuals commencing any of their duties at the central count station.

For use in Primary Elections, General Elections for State and County Officers and Elections ordered by the Governor:

"I swear (or affirm) that I will objectively work to be sure every eligible voter's vote is accepted and counted, and that only the ballots of those voters who violated the Texas Election Code will be rejected. I will make every effort to reflect the voter's intent when it can be clearly determined. I will not work alone when ballots are present and will work in the presence of a member of a political party different from my own. I will faithfully perform my duty as an officer of the election and guard the purity of the election."

For use in all other elections that do not contain party affiliations:

"I swear (or affirm) that I will objectively work to be sure every eligible voter's vote is accepted and counted, and that only ballots of those voters who violated the Texas Election Code will be rejected. I will make every effort to correctly reflect the voter's intent when it can be clearly determined. I will not work alone when ballots are present. I will faithfully perform my duty as an officer of the election and guard the purity of the election."

H. INTAKE OF BALLOTS, ELECTRONIC MEDIA, AND SUPPLIES:

Sections 129.051 and 129.052 of the Texas Election Code require the general custodian of election records to develop certain procedures related to inventory control and chain of custody of voting system equipment and electronic media associated with this equipment, providing for verification of equipment identifiers, verifications of seals, and verification of chain of custody.

1. Election Judges, or their designee, bring in the scan device, ballot count report and ballot transfer bags containing the voted ballots to the Uvalde County Elections Administration Office.

2. Intake personnel will remove the external seal applied prior to leaving the voting location. Next, they verify the serial number of the equipment as shown on the vDrive transfer bag label. Finally, confirmation of the intact seal on the media storage door and the number is the same as on the Official Register of Seals.

3. Intake personnel remove the vDrive and place it in the Transfer Bag along with the removed seal from the media storage door and closed polls tape from the Scan.
4. The Presiding Judge receives the Transfer Bag, removes the vDrive, and verifies the Tabulation Supervisor or Assistant Tabulation Supervisor reads the drive into the tabulation computer to tally the totals. The Presiding Judge and CCS Manager or designee, shall verify that the vote totals on the electronic media match the vote totals on the printed results tape.
5. After uploading all precinct results to the central accumulator, the election official must verify and document that the central accumulator's total number of votes cast in an election matches the number of scanned ballots. If there is a discrepancy, the Presiding Judge of the CCS in conjunction with the CCS Manager shall determine if a further audit is necessary.

H. DUPLICATION OF BALLOTS:

If necessary, duplication of certain damaged ballots may occur if the ballot cannot be read with the equipment or damaged beyond use.

1. The Presiding Judge, with any assistants deemed necessary, will duplicate any damaged ballot in accordance with Section 127.126 of the Texas Election Code.
2. At least two members of differing political parties shall participate in the duplications of ballots.

I. RESOLVING VOTER INTENT:

At the direction of the Presiding Judge, CCS members will resolve any voter intent questions on the ballots as they are duplicated or manually counted, as applicable.

1. Ballots, not damaged, once resolved, shall be counted by the Early Voting Ballot Board (EVBB).
2. Damaged ballots, unable to be processed by the EVBB scan system will be duplicated. Prior to duplicating the ballot, the Presiding Judge, or an appointed ballot board team, with members from differing parties, will determine the manner in which the voter's intent was deciphered.

J. COUNTING WRITE-INS

Write-ins must be resolved, if applicable, by the CCS members before results can be produced.

K. RECONCILIATION:

The process for comparing the number of voters listed as having voted and the number of ballots cast is done in three ways:

1. Early Voting in Person – Compare the number of early voting check-ins from the ePollbooks, minus any ballots not counted (e.g. provisional, spoiled, unable to be

read by Scan), to the total number of ballots cast.

2. Early Voting by Mail – Compare the number of ballots entered on the Ballot Transmittal Form from the early voting ballot board to the number of ballots counted (Sec. 87.021, 87.1221 TEC).
3. Election Day – Compare the number of voters on the ePollbooks, and the Omissions List entries, minus any ballots thrown out (e.g. provisional, spoiled), to the total number of ballots cast (Sec. 127.007 (b) TEC).

4. The Unofficial Reconciliation form will be posted on the Elections Administrations website before leaving for the night.

L. PRINTING OF PRECINCT RETURNS AND ELECTION TOTALS:

Under Section 127.127 of the TEC, the Tabulation Supervisor and the Assistant Tabulation Supervisor are the only ones authorized to operate the automatic tabulating equipment or handle ballots that are automatically counted. After the counting of ballots (or accumulation of vote totals) has occurred, the Tabulations Supervisor or Assistant Tabulation Supervisor of the CCS are responsible for preparing the precinct election returns. The Presiding Judge is required to sign the precinct returns to certify their accuracy.

The printed "precinct by precinct" report that has been adjusted to include any hand-counted ballots (if necessary) constitutes the certified precinct returns (Section 127.131 (e) TEC).

The unofficial election results shall be released as soon as available after the polls close. Alternatively, the Presiding Judge of the CCS, in cooperation with the Elections Administrator, may withhold the release of unofficial results until the last voter has voted (Section 121.1311 TEC).

Unofficial early voting results will be released via Uvalde County's Election Night Results on the Elections webpage, beginning no earlier than 7:00 p.m.

Election Day results will be released after all the vDrives from all the polling locations have been processed through acceptance and tabulation and all results are in (Section 121.1311 TEC). In a Primary Election, the unofficial results will be given to the Party Chairs first and after they have signed off on the results the results will be posted on the front windows of the building where the Elections Administration office is located as well as the Elections Administration website.

M. REPORTING RESULTS TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

For certain elections, including Primary Elections, the General Elections for State and County Officers, and Constitutional Amendment Elections, the Secretary of State (SOS) is required to tabulate the unofficial results statewide (Section 68.001 TEC). This information must be reported to the SOS through their online portal and via telephone.

1. The Tabulations Supervisor will prepare reports with the requested totals for the SOS. Each CCS member that is an employee of the Uvalde County Elections Administration will be given results to be taken with them. So that the SOS may be able to contact them if any questions should arise that need to be answered.

2. The Uvalde County Elections Administrator will report the totals to the SOS using the online portal via TEAMS in her office. All totals will be entered before any of the CCS teams members leaves for the night, unless told to leave by the CCS Manager. While this reporting process can occur in the CCS as part of the central counting station's activities, it is not required to be conducted in the CCS. If the reporting process is conducted in the CCS, then poll watchers are entitled to observe those activities. If the reporting process is conducted in the general custodian's office and is not conducted in the CCS, then the general custodian is not required to provide poll watchers with access to their office if it is located outside of the CCS area. The Uvalde County Election Administrator's office and desk is not in the CCS area (Secs. 33., 33.056, 68.034).

N. POLL WATCHERS

Poll watchers are entitled to be present during the time the CCS has convened for the "purpose of processing or preparing to process elections results and until the election officers complete their duties at the station" (Section 33.055 TEC).

A watcher may not leave during voting hours on Election Day without the presiding judge's permission if the counting of ballots at the central count station has begun (Section 33.055 (b) TEC).

The poll watcher must deliver both their certificate of completion for the Texas SOS Poll Watcher Training and their certificate of appointment to the Presiding Judge of the CCS. The Presiding Judge must countersign and retain their certificate of appointment and certificate of completion.

Poll watcher(s) are permitted to stand, sit, or move freely without obstructing the conduct of the election or interfering with the duties of the CCS personnel, while still being able to observe all activities (Section 33.015 TEC).

All activities of poll watcher(s) shall comply with Sections 33.015, 33.055, 33.056, 33.060 and the current *Poll Watchers Guide* issued by the Secretary of State.

O. DELIVERY OF MATERIALS TO THE GENERAL CUSTODIAN OF ELECTION RECORDS:

After the completion of the counting of ballots both on Election Day and after Election Day, if necessary, voted ballots, electronic media, election records, and election equipment will be retained by the Elections Administration Office, who is the general custodian of election records, through the appropriate retention period in order to allow for the review of serial numbers as required.

P. SECURITY PROCEDURES:

A Licensed Peace Officer will be posted at the CCS as required at any time the CCS is convened (Section 127.1232 (a) TEC).