

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS SECTION – LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU

Executive Summary: 2007 Proposed Budget – Election Commission

1. The federal government enacted the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) to make reforms and improvements to voting systems and voter access in all states. *(Page 3)*
2. A city task force studied the Election Commission and made recommendations in 2005. *(Pages 3 and 4)*
3. The 2006 Budget funded 4 elections. *(Page 4)*
4. The 2007 Proposed Budget provides funding for 2 elections: *(Page 5)*
 - Spring Primary on February 20
 - Spring General Election on April 4
5. The 2007 Proposed Budget funds a total of 36 positions, a decrease of 74 positions, from 110 positions funded in the 2006 Budget. *(Pages 5, 6 and 7)*
 - Poll Workers *(Page 5)*
 - Recruitment *(Page 6)*
 - Training *(Page 6)*
 - Wages *(Page 6)*
 - Polling Locations *(Pages 6 and 7)*
 - Equipment *(Page 7)*
6. In Operating Expenditures, the 2007 Proposed Budget provides \$552,800, a decrease of \$503,200, -47.7%, from the 2006 Budget of \$1,056,000. *(Page 7)*
7. In Equipment Purchases, the 2007 Proposed Budget provides \$55,000, an increase of \$37,000, 205.6%, from the 2006 Budget of \$18,000. *(Page 7)*
8. The 2007 Proposed Budget does not provide revenue projections. However, the State Elections Board has issued new guidelines and rates for voting records will impact revenue estimates. *(Page 8)*

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS SECTION – LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU

2007 Proposed Budget Summary: Election Commission

Category	2005 Actual	2006 Budget	% Change	2007 Proposed	% Change
Operating	\$1,267,805	1,815,237	43.2%	\$1,303,878	-28.1%
FTE – O&M *	14.76	19.16	29.8%	11.02	-42.5%
Positions***	70**	110**	57.1%	36	%

* The total includes Commissioners, Temporary Office Assistants II, and Temporary Election Laborers.

** Election chief inspectors, regular inspectors and registrars are paid as vendors through the Other Operating Services Account.

*** Authorized positions include full-time, part-time funded and un-funded positions, auxiliary positions and Election Commission Members.

The Election Commission registers City of Milwaukee voters and conducts elections. It is composed of three citizen members representing the 2 political parties receiving the most votes for governor in the City in the last general election. Staff assistance is provided by an Executive Director, 6 other full-time employees and temporary employees utilized at election time.

Mission Statement: "To conduct elections that build the public trust in the democratic process."

PERTINENT HISTORICAL INFORMATION

1. Redistricting action taken by the Common Council in 2001 resulted in a reduction in the number of election wards, from 335 to 314, and the number of polling locations to 202.
2. Commencing with the 2002 Budget, poll workers are paid from the Other Operating Services account and not from staff salary.
3. In the 2002 Budget, the Election Commission was funded to conduct 4 citywide elections, which included judicial, state, and school board races. However, due to the retirement of the County Executive and recall of several County Supervisors, the city participated in 4 special elections that included 3 recall elections.
4. In the 2003 Budget, the Election Commission was funded to conduct 2 citywide elections. However, due to the recall and resignations of municipal, county and state officials, the City participated in 2 recall and 6 special elections.
5. In the 2003 Budget election inspectors received a 10% increase in salary, from \$76.50 per day to \$84.15, an increase of \$7.65 per day. The last increase for election inspectors was in 1998.
6. In the 2004 Budget, the citywide reduction of the number of aldermanic districts from 17 to 15 required a change in aldermanic district boundaries. As a result, the Election Commission revised the number and locations of polling locations according to the new boundaries.

7. In the 2004 Budget, 2 Office Assistant III, SG425 were reclassified to 2 Program Assistant I, SG 460 positions due to change in workload. One position is the Absentee Coordinator and directs the department's compliance with the Help America Vote Act (HAVA). The second position coordinates the poll worker activities, assignments, training and administrative duties.
8. In the 2005 Budget, the Election Commission was funded to conduct 2 citywide elections.
9. In 2005, an Election Commission Task Force completed a study of the Election Commission Office, issuing recommendations related to voter registration, absentee ballots, polling locations and poll workers.
10. In the 2006 Budget, the Election Commission was funded to conduct 4 citywide elections.

ELECTION ACTIVITIES

HELP AMERICA VOTE ACT

In 2002, the federal government enacted the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) to make reforms and improvements to voting systems and voter access in all states. HAVA mandated that all voter registration records be stored within a single registration system through the collection of specific information, including requirements for a single, centralized, voter registration database within a state. In the State of Wisconsin, only municipalities with a population greater than 5,000 are required to register voters, representing approximately 75% of the state's voting age residents.

In CCFN 031685, the Election Commission, representing the City, and the Wisconsin State Election Board agreed to a memorandum of understanding for a joint voter registration system to improve voter access in compliance with SVRS and HAVA.

The Wisconsin State Election Board has partnered with local election officials to implement a Statewide Voter Registration System (SVRS). Many of the election reforms mandated by HAVA are already standing practice with local officials. The state election administration is responsible for greater uniformity and consistency throughout all municipalities. The State Plan Committee members are from various municipalities, counties and agencies from around the state, including Milwaukee. In response to HAVA and in order to receive federal funding, SVRS has been designed and implemented into a computerized statewide voter registration that is a single database for all registered voters as of June 27, 2006. Voting equipment that meets the standards established by HAVA to be used by the City of Milwaukee arrived August 21, 2006.

Task Force Recommendations

The 2004 Fall General Election process experienced major challenges before, during and after the November 2, 2004 election. The city had high voter turnout, a record number of absentee voters, increased on-site voter registration, numerous voters challenged by observers, and long lines at many polling locations causing long waits for voters before voting. In order to alleviate these issues, the Mayor formed the Election Task Force to study the City's election system. On June 27, 2005, a study was issued with various recommendations related to voter registration, absentee ballots, polling locations and poll workers. The recommendations included and subsequent actions (in italics):

Restructuring Staff – Staff has been restructured and cross-trained in voter registration, absentee ballots, poll workers and polling locations.

Operating Procedures – Election procedures and policies have been updated. On-going partnerships are being developed with the private sector for recruitment in securing new Chief Inspectors and poll workers.

Training – Mandatory training for Chief Inspectors and Poll Workers and Registrars has been expanded. Increased compensation for poll workers is being reviewed.

Recommendations requiring changes in state statutes include:

Establish an earlier "cut-off" date for voter pre-registration of 21 to 29 days prior to an election, in lieu of the current 13-day deadline. *Voter registration by mail and special registration deputy now closes the 3rd Wednesday (20 days) before the election. The deadline change increases the time to manage voter registration cards.*

Allow electors to vote (in-person) absentee at a "satellite" location. Current law requires that absentee voting occur at the Office of the City Clerk, designated to the Election Commission office. A "satellite" location allows the staff to process more than one voter at a time.

Allow for the processing of absentee ballots at a "satellite" location rather than at the polls. Staff would count ballots, properly record each absentee ballot with voter, and record on the polling list prepared for Election Day.

S. 6.855 of the state statutes states that a municipality may relocate the absentee ballot processing and absentee function to a more convenient location in the municipality. The department indicates that an alternative site allow staff to provide better service who choose to vote in-person absentee.

Advance the statutory deadline for voter submittal of absentee ballot request applications to at least 7 days prior to the election, in lieu of the current deadline of 5 p.m. on the Friday prior to an election. *S. 6.86 (1)(b)(c) of the state statute was changed. A request for an absentee ballot by mail must be received by the 5th day (Thursday) immediately preceding an election. Previously, the request had to be by 5 p.m. on the 4th day prior to an election. Applications can be processed more effectively, reducing time for confusion for the voter and staff. And,*

A request for an absentee ballot is only for a calendar year. S. 6.86(2m) states that registered voters must request an absentee ballot, on an annual basis, for all elections for that year. The department indicates that this will required more data entry by the staff.

2006 Elections

In the 2006 Budget, the Election Commission was funded to participate in 4 elections. They included:

Spring Primary Election, February 21, *not held due to number of candidates*
Spring General Election, April 4

Fall Primary Election, September 12
Fall General Election, November 7

The following charts show voter results in the 2006 elections

2006 Election Activity (As of 10/2/06)

Election Dates	4/4/06	9/12/06
Pre-Registered Voters*	300,861	299,419
Ballots Cast	15,988	46,548
Voter Turnout	5.31%	15.5%
Registered On Site	661	**
Absentee Ballots Cast	3,323	**

* The voter numbers are based on whether an election was city wide or by district.

** Data was unavailable at time of this write-up.

The Election Commission, mandated by the HAVA, ordered 206 new voting machines. The equipment was necessary to be accessible for the disabled voters. Delivery of the equipment was expected by July 15th but did not arrive until August 21st. Personnel were trained but did not have adequate time to test each machine, with the fall primary scheduled on September 12. This resulted in the equipment not being programmed properly, which reported a higher number of votes cast than actual number of voter ballots. Safeguards have been instituted to prevent this from occurring in the future.

2007 MAJOR ISSUES AND PROPOSED CHANGES

2007 ELECTION ACTIVITY

In the 2007 Proposed Budget, the Election Commission is scheduled to conduct 2 elections:

Spring Primary, February 20 – *(Projected turnout, 15,000-16,000 voters)*

Spring General Election, April 4– *(Projected turnout 18,500-20,000 voters)*

State – *State Supreme Court Justice*

County – *Circuit Court Judges, Branch 11, 15, 29 and 40*

City – *Milwaukee School Board, Districts 1, 2, 3, 8 and At Large*

Municipal Judges, Branch 2 and 3

PERSONNEL

The 2007 Proposed Budget funds 2 elections for a total of 36 positions, a decrease of 74 positions, -67.3%, from the 110 positions funded in the 2006 Budget. FTE's funded by O&M is 11.02, a decrease of -8.14 FTE's, -42.5% from the 19.16 allocated in the 2006 Budget.

The 2007 Proposed Budget makes the following changes:

- 22 **Temporary Office Assistant II (.11 FTE), SG 410** positions at \$106,841, a decrease of 72 positions from the 94 positions funded in the 2006 Budget at \$248,256.
- 4 **Temporary Election Laborer (.11 FTE), SG 205** positions at \$35,533, a decrease of 2 of 6 positions from the 6 positions funded in the 2006 Budget at \$15,846. *These positions were reclassified in 2005 from Temporary Office Assistant II to provide more adequate response in the election process.*

There are no vacancies in the department.

Poll Workers

Poll workers assist voters on Election Day at the polling locations in the wards. The type and number of poll workers for elections is usually:

- *Chief Election Inspectors for every primary and general election* 219
- *Registrars for on-site voter registration at general elections* 314
- *Regular Election Inspectors for every primary and general election* 1240

Recruitment

1. The recruitment of poll workers is on-going. The department works with many organizations, churches, community-based organizations and the Democratic and Republican parties. The department also uses community ads, Aldermanic newsletters, unions and the MTEA's newsletter as well as speaking engagements, public service announcements, city employees and other professional organizations. The department is exploring ways to create partnerships with Milwaukee's corporate and educational communities for additional poll workers.
2. Qualifications to be a poll worker include being an eligible voter, a city resident, ability to read and speak the English language, and attendance of a two-hour training session.
3. A significant number of new poll workers were recruited and the department implemented split shifts, requiring the training of additional 400 workers. This was labor intensive and may not be offered in the future.

Training

1. Poll workers are trained prior to every election. Training information from 2002 through 2006 includes:

2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
2,454	1,224	1,304	979	2,700

Wages

1. In the 2003 Budget, poll workers received a 10% increase in salary, from \$76.50 per day to \$84.15, an increase of \$7.65 per day. The last increase for election inspectors was in 1998. On Election Day, workers generally begin at 6:30 a.m. and work until 9 p.m., with polls closing at 8 p.m. Chief Inspectors are expected to stay, especially for a major election, until the voting results are reconciled, as late as 12 p.m., and making sure all election material has been secured. The poll workers take an hour for lunch and dinner.
2. An adequate number of workers are assigned to each polling location to allow rotation of workers for breaks, lunch and dinner, managed by the Chief Inspectors. Each polling location is staffed with 5 personnel of which one is appointed "Chief Inspector". If a location covers more than one ward, additional personnel are assigned i.e., 2 wards required 7 poll workers, 3 wards require 9 poll workers, of which 2 are appointed Chief Inspectors.

Polling Locations

1. There are 200 polling locations used for 314 wards in city-wide elections. Some locations have multiple wards (two or three). There are 94 multiple ward locations. The locations include 32 private facilities, 149 city facilities and 19 county owned properties. All sites are accessible to persons with disabilities.
2. HAVA mandated an Accessibility Survey. The survey was administered to all Milwaukee polling locations by the department and the State Election Board, for accessibility compliance. Of Milwaukee's previous 202 sites, 27%, 54 sites, were fully compliant with HAVA accessibility requirements for site accessibility, layout, space, equipment and

materials and flow and circulation. The other 73%, 148 sites, had some form of non-compliance varying from site to site. Some sites required minimal modifications, with others requiring considerable modifications, which resulted in the selection of new sites.

Equipment

1. The State Elections Board provided municipalities with a list of vendors that offer fully accessible election voting machines that meet HAVA voting equipment standards. In 2006, the department purchased fully accessible voting machines based on the State Election Board guidelines. The equipment cost, for 206 voting machines and tables, is \$1,205,230. The State Election Board will use designated HAVA funds to purchase the equipment. The equipment allows any person, regardless of disability, to vote independently and privately at any City of Milwaukee polling location, and is fully compatible with existing City voting equipment.
2. The members of the disabled community reviewed three different types of voting equipment designed for their needs. From their comments a vendor was chosen and the equipment was ordered.
3. The HAVA funding is for the equipment and maintenance agreement. The maintenance agreement is for 2 years.

LINE ITEMS

1. In Operating Expenditures, the 2007 Proposed Budget provides \$552,800, a decrease of \$503,200, -47.7%, from the 2006 Budget of \$1,056,000. This includes:
 - Other Operating Services, \$458,800 will decrease by \$491,200, -51.7% from the 2006 Budget of \$950,000. This account decreases because of the reduced number of elections, and covers the cost for fees and commissions, transportation, communication, postage, printing, binding, advertising, reproduction, office training, and salaries for poll workers (*election chief inspectors, regular inspectors and registrars*).
 - Facility Rental, \$11,500 is for rental of polling locations. This is a decrease of \$12,500, -52.1%, from the 2006 Budget of \$24,000, due to the reduced number of elections and the rental fees associated with private locations used as polling places.
2. In Equipment Purchases, \$55,000, the 2007 Proposed Budget provides \$55,000, an increase of \$37,000, 205.6% from the 2006 Budget of \$18,000. The funding will be used for an absentee ballot tabulator, additional equipment. The absentee ballot tabulator will process and count the absentee ballots that are cast prior to election. The equipment is capable of counting and tabulating absentee ballots for up to 1,000 wards, well over the citywide 314 wards.

As a result of statewide legislation, which permits an alternative site for counting ballots, the absentee ballot tabulator can process all absentee ballots. It is no longer necessary to count the absentee votes in each ward.

DEPARTMENTAL REVENUES

The estimated revenue is primarily from the sale of polling/ward books. At the time the department was preparing its Requested Budget, revenue projections for 2007 were estimated at less than \$1,000. After conferring with the Comptroller's Office, the department did not submit 2007 revenue projection.

1. The fee for obtaining a citywide report of registered voters, \$1,675 established in 1999, has been challenged in court with respect to the city's cost in producing the record. In 1998, the fee was \$837.50. File #001696, adopted by the Common Council on April 10, 2001, authorized the department and City Comptroller to study the costs of retrieving, reproducing and providing lists of voters for purchase.
2. In 2006, the Comptroller's Office completed a study of the costs. On February 29, 2006, the Common Council, through File 051270, approved the following adjusted rates:

Reports of Registered Voters	\$10.96	<i>The number of wards does not change the rate.</i>
Diskettes	\$0.96	per disk
Compact Disk	\$0.70	per disk
Hard Copy	\$0.10	per page

2. Revenues from polling list orders from 2002 through 2006 reflects:

	Polling Lists Number	Revenue
2002	168	\$13,267.00
2003	175	\$13,545.61
2004	175	\$11,529.73
2005	41	\$ 3,180.84
2006 (YTD)	37	\$ 545.14

3. As of September 27, 2006, s. 3.50 EIBd, Wisconsin Administrative Code established charges for voter registration data. The pricing structure is for information from the SVRS. This will involve a standard set of reports. An example, the price for voter information regarding the city of Milwaukee includes:

\$ 25	Base fee for each electronic database request
\$ 5	Cost for the first 1,000 records
\$ 5	Cost for each additional 1,000 records
\$2,500	Maximum cost for an electronic report
\$ 0.25	Cost per page for a paper report, <i>plus postage and shipping</i>

The maximum cost for Milwaukee records, with an estimated 301,000 voters, is \$2,500.

According to the State Election Board, if Milwaukee generates electronic or paper records as the result of a request, the city retains the revenue. If the State Election Board generates the records, the state retains the revenue.

The new pricing structure will require an ordinance change.