

MACON COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
Board Meeting and Voting Machine Demonstration and Discussion
30-31 August 2022

Participants: Director Melanie Thibault, Deputy Director Judy Fritts, Gary Dills, Kathy Tinsley, Jeff Gillette and John Vanhook.

Observers: Approximately 50 people from the community attended the demonstration.

Call to Order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 6PM. Director Thibault welcomed the public to the demonstration and introduced the HART Interactive representatives (Mr. Bob Helsner – Director of Sales, South Region and Ms. Grace Murdoch – Field Tech).

1. Review. Our current machines are using 40-year-old technology and are not mechanically supportable since the M100 is out of production. New machines, regardless of vendors, will get us to current technology with a system that is supportable.
2. Observations: The demonstration pointed out some facets of the HART system:
 - a. The machines and software are state of the art. They are secured via the encryption device (a proprietary flash drive). The encryption key only allows access by those who need it.
 - b. Set up is easy for the poll workers. All they have to do is open the container, put the tablet in place, lock it in, turn on and it's ready to go. The tape in the tabulator machine is easy to load, just drop it in and close the lid.
 - c. No maintenance agreement is necessary. Maintenance can be done locally and involves cleaning the faces of the tablets and checking the batteries. An annual hardware warranty is recommended (at approximately \$4500).
 - d. The system is supported by a technical representative in Asheville and via phone to the main office in Texas.
 - e. The system uses paper ballots so there is always a paper trail.
 - f. The Automark (ADA equipment) is much lighter than the current version and intuitive in set up and operation.
 - g. The battery maintains a charge and trickle charges constantly when the machine is plugged in.
 - h. The company provides a one-stop shop – they provide the encryption devices, election set up, and ballots for each election.

- i. The cost of ballots is determined by the number of candidates not the number of ballots. We would still need to purchase some ballots but much fewer than currently.
 - j. Recurring costs are approximately \$19.5K. There is no maintenance contract although probably a recurring hardware warranty cost of approximately \$4500.
 - k. This is a Texas company serving almost 700 counties across the country.
- 3. Public Comments: The people present asked many questions mostly concerning perceived/real voting issues in venues outside North Carolina. Mr Helsner answered most on the spot and took others to respond via email.
- 4. Recess: With no further business, Mr. Dills made a motion to recess until 31 August at 11 AM. Mr. Gillette seconded the motion and the Board unanimously approved. The Board adjourned at 7:30 PM.
- 5. Return from Recess: The Chair called the Board back to order at 11 AM. Ms. Garrison and Mr Vanhook could not attend this session.
- 6. Discussion/Observations:
 - a. Mr Helsner reviewed the HART proposal. (Attachment 1)
 - b. He elaborated on his recommendation for a hardware warranty and reiterated no need for a maintenance contract.
 - c. He noted that recurring costs would include the annual licensing and support fee (\$9533); hardware warranty (\$4500), and coding based on number of candidates (less that \$4950 based on history).
 - d. L&A testing would be less work for our contractor.
 - e. Equipment is smaller (take up less room). There is more equipment to deliver (but not as heavy as competitor).
 - f. The Ballot on demand feature could cut our ballot costs down by 40-50% and reduce waste.
- 7. Motion: Mr Dills made a motion to ask PrintElect to hold a discussion with the Board to review their contract proposal. Mr. Gillette seconded the motion and the Board unanimously approved.
- 8. Invoices: The Director provided four invoices for Chair signature (3 for Amazon office supplies and one for Macon Printing for required posters). Attachment 2
- 9. Adjourn: Mr. Dills made a motion to adjourn until 12 September at 4:30 PM. Mr. Gillette seconded the motion and the Board unanimously approved. The Board adjourned at 12:35 PM.

Attachments

- 1. HART proposal
- 2. Four invoices