

NYSBOE Roundtable on Early Voting – 12/9/19 notes

In attendance:

- NYSBOE (Co-Executive Directors, Public Information Officer and Deputy, Operations Director, Chief Information Security Officer),
- New York City BOE,
- Schenectady County BOE,
- Washington County BOE,
- Greene County BOE,
- Essex County BOE,
- NYS Assembly Elections staff,
- VoteEarly NY,
- League of Women Voters,
- NYSAC,
- UAlbany Center for Technology in Government, Program Director

What went well?

New York City

Friday night meeting

Any line anytime

Help desk model

Durable signage/chum

1:1 ratio

Poll workers adapted to e-poll books nicely

E-poll books went well

On-demand system itself went well

Customized connectivity

Sim cards with multiple vendors

Workflow - easy to use, well received by voters

On day one problem with the printing but it was no big deal

Greene County

used paper ballots

They had no issues

They hope to move to an on-demand system

Maybe for April? They've been communicating with Know Ink (vendor) Not clear

Schenectady County

Used Tenex

Smooth process

Responsive vendors

Essex County

Used paper ballots
Different poll workers every day
300 people who voted (small number) just one poll site
State of emergency declared on November 1st – 57 roads closed; 911 system went down

Washington County

Used Tenex
One site at board of elections

Challenges

NYC:

Ballot on demand printers sometimes go to sleep
Poll pads have to be able to communicate with each other
Syncing glitch after poll pad goes to sleep and wakes up, they may “pair” incorrectly, even if properly paired at initial setup
“Too much noise” in sites with the most machines
“Electrical Throughput” (of so many printers) esp. on startup
8 devices or less no problem but when it was more, it was a problem
Sync on demand prints/poll book
- Fixed day one
Printer can go to sleep
Uninterrupted connectivity
Ratio of E-poll books – printers
Procurement timetable – tight
Supply chain – production
Amps/Power for printers – generators
Breakdown/set up of EV site
Finding adequate space for EV (and willing hosts)
Location of Early Voting site (accessible, increase #)
Halloween hours
Last Sunday turnaround for ED

Who makes the call if it's an isolated state of emergency? Issue just to one county, or a few counties?

Make declarations of emergency

There doesn't seem to be an emergency resiliency plan, it hasn't been updated to reflect early voting, there's a statute that the governor can declare state of emergency and an extra voting day after election day; but what do you do with early voting if there's a chunk of the state that misses a few days of voting? What's the process and whose call is it?

VENY: E-poll book configuration (and defaults) are a patchwork with minimal guidelines or oversight for EL or civil rights safeguards.

Eg: KnowInk: If you're not found to be registered in the county, the workflow of the e-poll book doesn't suggest you fill out an affidavit ballot

9 days is better than 1; these weather days could happen on election day

NYSAC got positive feedback from localities

SBOE: 2020 we'll have high turnout because people are excited which means we need to scale up

Schenectady: printer sleep issues

NYC = 147K for diesel fuel for 9 days 49 sites

Legislative, Regulatory, or Procedure Change

Tech: Uniform E-poll guidelines (front/back end) – all data in; who has access? What info? When?

Clarify scan feature functionality rules or signage or make barcode scanning universal

Notification: summer notification for an October election is NOT enough notice

What changes do we need to implement?

What if someone dies? How far before election does death need to occur in order for them to be replaced by another candidate?

7 days before election (replace deceased candidate) – but early voting is 10 days before, so that's a problem. What time frame works? Maybe 45 days?

Look at law for emergencies during EV

Absentee data transmitted similar to UOCAVA

Regionally adopt the same set of hours? Do we standardize the voting hours?

-**VENY:** this is not ideal because 19 BOEs (large/small, blue, red purple, urban/rural) went above the required hours. Need to figure out what works best in each locality, based on a few cycles of turnout data. Also, e.g., could expand final-weekend hours, rather than run 9AM-2PM. E-poll book data will help show patterns to help pick hours that make sense

--Counties raised concerns about how much labor must be done between final Sunday PM and Election Day.

Not just about the technology its about the infrastructure and the connectivity; you have to be able to collect data and process it internally.

NYC: Signature image is a challenge for larger jurisdiction; iPad has only a certain amount of storage for those images, they have to be stored somewhere else (the cloud) and brought in on demand; but then can the cloud be hacked? We need answers

Do we need another round of capital? Always budget challenges

State law on proper standard of reimbursement for rental of private space

NYC: Procurement of private sites? - licensing agreements

Westchester pays for them (cost of “incidentals”)

Statute prioritizes free sites based on tax exempt status

How do you reimburse sites for incidentals to make it more palatable for them to serve? **NYC:** In some cases, underutilized hosts were grateful for the influx of foot traffic.

VENY: Fully funded state board of elections?

SBOE pointed out that they were asked by lawmakers at the post-election hearing about their advertising budget and other outreach, completely unaware that SBOE has no funding (or mandate) for that.

NYCBOE: Timing of presidential year mail check card and the election notification should be re-considered due to consolidated primaries and early voting periods. Notice in Presidential years should come earlier due to April presidential primary

Costs:

Epoll books, printers, machines, staff, other tech, security gurads, fuel/power, poll sites,

- need infrastructure: technology and connectivity, data, need time to test

More capital grant \$ needed

More aid to Localities needed

SBOE asks all counties to submit their total costs so they can report comprehensively what it costs to administer and to help inform future funding needs and requests.