

Board of Elections Report to Legislative Committee  
May 5, 2020

**Reported By:** Election Commissioners Toombs and Wahls

**Financial Update/Budget 2020:**

YTD Budget Report Attached

**Old Business:**

Presidential Primary postponed to June 23, 2020. Village and School elections postponed, still no new date.

Annual Mail Check cards were sent to every registered voter on file per the cut-off date of February 21, 2020.

**New Business:**

Undeliverable mail check cards have mostly been returned, with some still trickling in. We do not have the numbers yet.

We are seeing a rise in requests from voters for Absentee Ballot applications, especially now that any voter is eligible to vote absentee for the June 23 primary due to COVID-19. Our webpage lists this application for the voter to download, print and mail to our office.

NYS Presidential Primary is now cancelled, as per ruling by State Commissioners Kellner and Spano on April 27.

Per Governor Cuomo's Executive Order 202.23, to help maintain social distancing on Election Day, every eligible voter will be mailed an absentee application, with a postage-paid return envelope. We have a countywide Republican primary, so will have to mail applications to all 15,000+ registered Republicans. We received quotes from vendors NTS Data Services and Phoenix Graphics to accomplish this mass mailing, and we will be choosing NTS as it is more cost effective by far. Estimated cost will be \$6,760.35 for the mailer, plus \$7,511.50 for postage.

To accommodate the unanticipated influx of absentee applications and subsequent absentee ballots, we may need to enlist some election inspectors/temporary staff for processing all the envelopes.

We plan to consolidate election districts for the primary election to reduce the number of poll sites required to be open and reduce the number of election inspectors required to work.

We are looking into the cost of a central count system to tally votes of the thousands of absentee ballots we anticipate for the June primary, as well as for the general election in November and any future elections. With only 4 F/T and 2 P/T staff and up to 15,000 absentee ballots to process for the primary, 30,000 for the general, a central count scan system would save our staff a vast amount of time and labor in tallying votes, and help us to meet the certification deadline for election results.

Tioga County will be eligible for \$64,000 grant funding from HAVA CARES Act to assist with added election expenses due to COVID-19 for the 2020 Federal Election.

Commissioners have been attending weekly joint meetings (virtual) with the NYS Election Commissioners' Association (NYSECA) and NYS Board of Elections to stay up to date, as well as weekly meetings with their respective NYSECA caucuses.

As a result of the COVID-19 situation, our office has reduced hours with one staff member available from 9 AM – 1 PM, Monday through Thursday. Both Commissioners have been in the office on Fridays, generally from 9 AM – 1 PM, to complete bi-partisan tasks, process mail, make plans, and catch up on other work. Staff are monitoring emails and automatic replies are on reflecting our reduced hours of operation.

We have requested Buildings and Grounds to install a Plexiglass barrier at our front counter.

**Resolutions: None**