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Grant County Canvassing Board  
C/o The Honorable Bill Varney, County Auditor  
P.O. Box 37  
Ephrata, WA 98823

Dear Canvassing Board Members:

In accordance with RCW 29A.04.570, the State Election Certification and Training Program conducted a comprehensive review of election procedures in Grant County during the 2007 General Election.

The RCW also requires a follow-up visit prior to the next Primary or General Election to verify the County Auditor's Office has taken the steps necessary to correct the changes recommended in the review report.

The reviewer visited the Grant County Elections Department on October 30, 2008 and found that the Grant County Elections Department has changed its procedures to comply with the majority of the recommendations in the review report.

The Grant County Elections Department continues to be located in an area that lacks sufficient space to conduct an election efficiently. The department does not have room to conduct multiple tasks or to accommodate any extra help.

The county should provide more workspace for the elections department.

### Precincts

**Recommendation:** Any precinct with more than 900 hundred active registered voters should be divided into two or more precincts as soon as possible, but no later than 30 days prior to the first day for candidates to file for the primary. Voters in newly created precincts must be notified per RCW 29A.76.030.

**Follow up:** After the 2010 census this matter should be addressed.

by individually securing the envelope trays with a cover. The access to these envelopes with voted ballots must be accountable and documented.

Envelopes with ballots should never be transported outside of the processing area by just one employee. Two people should always accompany the ballots in transport.

Ballot processing should always be observable by at least one other person. The current Grant County Elections Department is restricted in available work space and does not provide room for temporary workers. It is recommended that office space be reconfigured in such a manner as to provide dedicated processing areas visible to two or more persons at all times.

**Follow up:** The office space has been reconfigured to allow as much space as possible for processing ballots.

The use of numbered seals and seal logs on the vault door are used to secure the unprocessed ballots.

### **Disability Access Units**

**Recommendation:** The Disability Access Unit must assure privacy, as well as accessibility, to the voter. The unit should be located in such a manner as to meet all requirements.

**Follow up:** The Disability Access Unit has been placed in a location which offers privacy and accessibility.

### **Manual Inspection of Ballots**

**Recommendation:** Manual inspection of a voted ballot is the primary assurance that the intent of a voter will be honored. Proper inspection must include reviewing all responses on a ballot. The Auditor should consider manual inspection as an essential activity done as a separate step prior to optical scanning. Because this is a process that is best done without interruption, it might be reasonable to delegate this activity to teams of trained seasonal employees.

**Follow up:** This activity has been delegated to seasoned employees.

### **Provisional Ballots**

**Recommendation:** As part of the free access system required for provisional voting, the voter must be provided with written information regarding how to learn the final resolution of the voter's provisional ballot. This information must be provided at the time of voting.

**Follow up:** Written instructions and information is now included with each provisional ballot.

## **Questionnaire to Jurisdictions**

**Recommendation:** Administrative rule and Grant County Elections Department procedures require questionnaires be sent to the jurisdictions. Since the purpose of the questionnaire is to confirm the positions open for filing and all pertinent information concerning these positions, it is best to create and retain a record of the answers supplied by jurisdictions. The County Auditor must mail, fax, or email the questionnaire to each jurisdiction every year. The questionnaire must confirm the names of the incumbents.

The questionnaire already included in the county procedures might be supplemented with a place for the respondent's signature and date of response.

The Auditor should be commended for using the questionnaire as an additional way to gather information on jurisdiction boundary changes.

**Follow up:** It is and has been standard procedure for Grant County Elections to send the questionnaire every year to the jurisdictions. A place for the respondent to sign and a place to add the response date has been added to the questionnaire.

## **Absentee Applications**

**Recommendation:** Special absentee ballot applications must be updated to reflect current requirements. Procedures should be written addressing when this type of application should be used and how to issue, accept, and comply with special absentee ballot application requests.

**Follow up:** Special absentee ballot applications have been updated to reflect current requirements and procedures have been written addressing this type of ballot application.

## **Jointly Shared Jurisdiction**

**Recommendation:** In order to properly conduct a joint jurisdiction election, the lead county must notify all joint counties of candidate filings. This communication is the responsibility of the lead county. Grant County Elections must develop procedures to guarantee information will be shared between joint counties for all candidate filings, no matter when the filings occur. It would be advisable for counties sharing a jurisdiction to meet and create written procedures regarding jointly shared jurisdictions. Confirmation of offices to appear on the ballot, candidate filings during regular and special filing periods, reporting election results, and documentation of such communications should be part of the procedures addressed.

**Follow up:** Written procedures are now in place and will be followed in all future elections of jointly shared jurisdictions.

## **Ballot Security**

**Recommendation:** Envelopes waiting for processing should be secured using numbered seals and seal logs. Physical access to the envelopes may be implemented by use of a cage, cabinet, or

## **Verification and Confirmation Notices**

**Recommendation:** Verification and confirmation notices must provide pre-paid return postage to the voter.

A postal endorsement which provides the forwarding address to the Auditor must be added to the confirmation notice if the Auditor wishes to continue using nonprofit postage rates.

**Follow up:** Pre-paid postage is now provided for all verification and confirmation notices sent to voters. These notices also contain the required postal endorsement.

## **Incomplete Voter Applications**

**Recommendation:** The Grant County Auditor should not send an incomplete voter registration form back to the applicant. A verification notice, not the original form, should be sent to applicants who submit an incomplete voter registration form. The verification notice must be postage prepaid. The voter registration form originally submitted must remain in the possession of the Auditor.

**Follow up:** A verification notice is now sent to any voter who submits an incomplete voter registration form. Pre-paid postage is provided.

## **Voter Name Changes**

**Recommendation:** Any written request for a name change from a voter is acceptable provided that the voter's former name and signature, new name and signature, and residence are included in the request.

**Follow up:** Any written request for a name change from a voter will be accepted provided that the voter's former name and signature, new name and signature, and residence are included in the request.

## **Public Notice of Availability of Service**

**Recommendation:** A notice of availability of services to the elderly and disabled persons must be published no later than 30 days before every election or primary. The notice may be incorporated in the notice of closing of registration.

**Follow up:** A notice of availability of services to the elderly and disabled persons will be published no later than 30 days before every election or primary. The notice will be incorporated in the notice of closing of registration.

## Voting Centers

**Recommendation:** A sign indicating the Grant County Courthouse is a place for voting must be displayed during business hours beginning the date ballots are mailed for the election until 8:00 p.m. election night.

**Follow up:** A sign indicating that the Grant County Courthouse is a place for voting was displayed for this election and will be for future elections.

## Disability Advisory Committee

**Recommendation:** A disability advisory committee composed of at least two people with disabilities and two people who are experienced in providing disability accommodations should be established by the Grant County Auditor immediately.

**Follow up:** The Grant County Auditor's Office has found it difficult to find members for this committee and has yet to form a disability advisory committee. This reviewer suggested contacting surrounding counties in hopes of forming a joint committee or to acquire leads on possible members for their own committee.

It was also suggested that they work with one of the disability advocacy organizations to resolve this issue.

## Canvassing Board Manual

**Recommendation:** The Grant County Canvassing Board Manual needs to be revised. Once updated, the Manual should be officially adopted by the Canvassing Board at a public meeting. The date of adoption should be included in the manual.

**Follow up:** The manual has been revised and will be adopted by the board at the next meeting. The Grant County Auditor, Bill Varney, and his staff should be commended for their obvious dedication to the election process and their desire to improve an already good operation.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 360.725.5785 or [kramsay@secstate.wa.gov](mailto:kramsay@secstate.wa.gov).

Sincerely,



Kay Ramsay  
Elections Program Specialist