



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 19-0908, **Version:** 1

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Elections Department recommending the Board:

- 1) Approve and authorize the Board Chair to sign contract 4081 with Runbeck Election Systems for the purchase of a new inbound envelope/ballot sorting system for an amount not to exceed \$317,491, including system purchase of \$227,491 in year one, plus associated annual maintenance and support of \$30,000 per year starting in year two, for the four year term July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2023;
- 2) Approve and authorize the addition of the envelope/ballot sorting system to the Fixed Asset list for the FY 2019-20 Board approved Recommended Budget; and
- 3) Approve and authorize the Purchasing Agent, or designee, to execute further documents relating to contract 4081, including amendments that do not increase the maximum dollar amount or term of the Agreement, and contingent upon approval by County Counsel and Risk Management.

**FUNDING:** Funding to be provided in this order, and will likely be a combination of: State Prop 41 Bonds for Modern Voting Equipment, Federal HAVA 301 Funds, State AB1824 Funds with up to 50% General Fund match.

### **DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND**

The County of El Dorado Elections Department is responsible for running transparent, open, thorough, and accurate elections for the voters of El Dorado County. A critical component of this responsibility is the efficient, thorough, and auditable receipt of mail ballots from voters.

The department currently mails approximately 98,000 ballots to voters. With the move to vote centers, approved by the board on April 23, 2019, all registered voters in the County will be mailed a ballot, which is expected to be close to 124,000 in 2020. The expected return for the Presidential General Election is 75% which would mean approximately 80,600 ballots returned by mail and the remainder at Vote Centers.

The current process in the department is to manually receive, count, batch, pull envelopes with missing signatures or from a prior election, and signature check each envelope. This manual process requires extensive time to properly audit and account for each ballot and is extremely labor and time intensive with trays of ballot envelopes being moved to individual desks to perform the signature checking process.

The Runbeck Agilis incoming sorter allows for all ballots to be fed through the sorter at a rate of up to 12,000 envelopes per hour and automatically sorted and batched, out stacking any envelopes with missing signatures, bad addresses, or from the wrong election. The system is integrated with the County's current Voter Registration System, so all signatures are electronically captured and matched with the voter registration record using the same signature recognition software used by banks. Any signatures not automatically accepted or rejected are presented to operators who can review and adjudicate signatures, all without touching a single envelope. After this process is completed the envelopes are scanned one more time to out stack any challenged signatures.

Throughout this whole process the system keeps record of detailed audit and adjudication logs for each envelope.

The system was selected by staff of the Elections Department, who reviewed the RFP and proposals from Sacramento County. The staff then visited two counties with the proposed systems and saw demonstrations of the systems during the June 4th election cycle. Staff selected the system that is the best fit for a county of our size and was the least expensive.

If the purchase of the Runbeck inbound envelope/ballot sorting system is approved, the CAO will process a budget transfer to move \$227,491 from Supplies and Services to Fixed Assets in the FY 2019-20 approved Recommended Budget for the Elections Department.

Elections Code Section 13001 and 14100 provide that elections officials are not required to use a county purchasing agent when acquiring election materials. Section 3.12.040(B) of the El Dorado County Code of Ordinances provides that, "The purchase of election materials and services shall not be subject to the provisions of this [Procurement] Chapter in accordance with Elections Code Section 13001." In addition, the County of El Dorado Board of Supervisors Policy C-17, Section 4.9 further clarifies that the procurement of elections materials are exempt from competitive bidding.

#### **ALTERNATIVES**

The County can continue with the manual process.

#### **PRIOR BOARD ACTION**

N/A

#### **OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT**

Information Technologies, County Counsel

#### **CAO RECOMMENDATION / COMMENTS**

It is recommended that the Board approve this item.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

The first year cost of the voting system equipment with service, support, and warranty is \$227,491. The ongoing annual license and maintenance cost starting in year two will be \$30,000. Funding for this system will be determined after the Voting Modernization Project Plan is submitted to the Voter Modernization Board (VMB) in early July and approved in early August 2019. It is expected that Prop 41, HAVA 301 and/or AB1824 funds will cover this purchase with minimal (if any) General Fund impact. AB1824 spending for voting systems, including a General Fund match of up to \$757,000, has been included in the FY 2019-20 Recommended Budget.

#### **CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS**

Send executed contract to Elections Department, attention Linda Webster.

#### **STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT**

Good Governance

#### **CONTACT**

Linda Webster, Assistant Registrar of Voters, x7483