

WISCONSIN ELECTIONS COMMISSION

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DATE: August 11, 2017

TO: Wisconsin Municipal Clerks
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Wisconsin County Clerks
Milwaukee County Elections Commission

FROM: Sara Linski Sarah Whitt
WisVote Elections Specialist WisVote IT Lead

SUBJECT: Commission Staff Approved to Build E-Poll Book In-House

At the June 20, 2017 meeting of the Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC), Commissioners approved staff's recommendation to build an electronic poll book system in-house and offer the software to Wisconsin clerks at no cost. E-poll books will be voluntary for municipalities to use. At this time the Commission intends to pilot the new e-poll book system in three to six jurisdictions in the 2018 spring elections and will be made available to all clerks in time for the 2018 Partisan Primary in August.

The new E-poll book system will be an electronic version of the paper poll books that are used today. Voters would check in or register to vote using a laptop or tablet instead of the paper poll book. The e-poll book data would then be imported directly into WisVote, eliminating the need for clerks to manually record election participation and enter Election Day Registrations. E-poll books can also be used to assist election inspectors in handling complicated Election Day processes by providing step-by-step instructions.

While the software will be available to clerks at no cost, local jurisdictions would need to purchase the hardware needed to run the system, such as a laptop or tablet, and printer. The specific hardware configuration and costs are not known at this time, but staff anticipates costs between \$500 and \$1,000 per poll book station, depending on the specific hardware needed. Each municipality would need to determine the number of stations needed at individual polling place. Using an e-poll book would eliminate the need to divide the poll list and voter lines by alphabet. E-poll books could be used at the registration table and the table where ballots are issued.

Building the e-poll book system in-house will allow WEC to customize the system to follow Wisconsin's specific election laws and procedures, such as photo ID, the felon list comparison and Election Day Registration. Commission staff will work with clerks and election workers to help develop prototypes of the system, and will test the software with different groups of users to find out what works and what does not. Staff would like to have a diverse group of clerks and election workers to work with in order to develop the best possible system. If you are interested in using the e-poll book system and would like to provide feedback during the design phase to Commission staff, please contact the Elections Help Desk at ePollbook@wi.gov or 608-261-2028.