

SOMERSET TOWNSHIP

ELECTION PROCESS

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To start the process the County Clerk publishes a notice of Election in the newspaper and also sends a notice of election to all registered voters in Somerset Township.

Prior to each election the County Clerks office puts together a precinct bag for Somerset Township. Precinct 1 and Precinct 2. The precinct bags contain a flash drive that has the election loaded on it, that enables the tabulator to process various ballots styles. There is another flash drive that is used one time to clear the tabulator data after the Public Audit, voting applications, the Poll Book and the envelopes for each Precinct closing

The County Clerks office receives election ballots from the printer and advises clerk when available.

Election Committee – The Supervisor, Clerk and Treasurer, comprise the Election Committee. They meet before the election to approve the election inspectors and authorize the clerk to perform the pre-election test on the tabulators. A copy of the Election inspectors schedule is sent to the head of the County Republican and Democrat parties.

Public Audit- Notice of the Public Audit is posted on the web site and on the inside and outside bulletin boards. The Clerk oversees the Public Audit which is open to the public and which tests the capability of the tabulator to process various styled ballots accurately, based on a predetermined set of ballots that includes various types of ballot conditions that can occur on Election Day on the tabulator. The Democrat and Republican Precinct Chairpersons, Treasurer, Supervisor and Clerk sign the tabulator tape when the results agree with the predetermined control chart. The flash drive containing the election is sealed in the tabulator and the tabulator is stored in a locked closet until election day.

Qualified Voter File (QVF)

QVF file is a State of Michigan computer file that contains all registered voters in Somerset Township. Clerk and Deputy Clerk have computer access through Username and Password. Each session is started with a verification code that is received from the State Election Dept.

Changes to voter file can happen as follows:

Motor Voter program adds voters to QVF when they apply for Driver's license.

Clerk receives notice of death (voter removed from QVF by state or clerk)

Voter registers at Clerks Office (voter added to QVF after verification)

Absentee Voting - Each election the Clerk mails out applications to Permanent Absentee voters who have at one-time requested to be on the Permanent Absentee Voters List. The registered voter signs the application and returns it to the Clerk. The date the application was mailed is entered into QVF for each registered voter under their specific profile which contains all their voting information. (Under Proposal 2 the voter can now elect to have a single permanent application on file for every future election which results in the voter being sent a ballot instead of receiving an application for each future election. In addition, the Clerk now sends a stamped return envelope with the application).

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After the registered voter signs the application and returns it to the Clerk, the Clerk checks the signature in QVF and records the date the application is received in QVF and then puts the Ballot package together.

The ballot package contains 5 items: The pre-numbered ballot, voting instructions, confidentiality envelope, return envelope (Green) and mail envelope (Blue). The Ballot number and the date sent is recorded and saved in QVF. Only 1 ballot can be issued to a voter except when a voter requests to spoil an AV ballot and is issued a new ballot, once the original ballot is returned in person and spoiled at the clerks' office. This transaction is recorded in QVF.

After voting the AV ballot, the voter returns the ballot to the Clerk, the return envelope (Green) is signature checked and recorded in QVF. (Under proposal 2 the return envelope now has return postage). The return envelope is then matched with the application and held until 8AM on voting day when it is sent to the Voting Precinct for processing. A QVF report showing application and ballot activity is available in the QVF program.

On Election day, the AV Ballots are given to each Precinct at 8AM for processing. One Republican and One Democrat open the envelopes together and record the information in the companion Poll book computer which has the registered voter list that was downloaded after 4PM the day before on a flash drive along with the pollbook program. The AV ballots are then sent to the tabulator throughout the day in groups of 10 for tabulation.

IN PERSON VOTING - The registered voter comes into the Township and votes in the proper Precinct as posted. Geographically: Precinct 1 West of Waldron RD and Precinct 2, Waldron RD and East of Waldron RD. The in-person voter enters the proper Precinct as designated by signage and fills out a voter application after showing proper identification. The voter then is located in the Pollbook which contains the previously downloaded registered voter file. The voter is given the proper ballot and the ballot number and voter number is recorded on the application and entered in the pollbook. The voter then votes the ballot in a privacy booth and then takes the ballot to the tabulator where it is tabulated, and the voter is given an "I Voted" sticker.

At 8PM on Election Day after all voters who were in line have voted the Precinct Chairpersons oversees the production of various required reports and the Pollbook Ballot Summary sheet is ready to be compared to the Tabulator list. The tabulator list is printed after the Polls are closed. Providing the final numbers are in agreement of voters entered in the pollbook and issued ballots and the ballots tabulated, then each Precinct goes through a closing process and the ballots from the tabulator are put into a sealed container and other document retention procedures are followed. Canvas Board, County Clerk and Local clerk Envelopes are sealed.

The Clerk then takes the required documents and both Flash Drives from the tabulators to the County Clerk. The Flash drives from the pollbook are returned to the Clerk and within 7 days after the election the individual voter record that shows the registered voter voted is uploaded to the State. The voter program for the election is then removed from the pollbook flash drive.

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Early Voting- Proposal 2 which was passed last November requires that the Clerk open up both Precincts for 9 working days prior to the Saturday before an Election Day, from 7AM until 8PM each day. This change requires that the Clerk hire 4 Election Inspectors for each precinct and buy an additional tabulator. The cost of manning for the 9 Days of Early voting is about \$5K. the cost of the Tabulator is about \$5K. It is estimated that about 20 registered voters will early vote during the 9 Days. The County is considering setting up a separate Voting Center at the County Courthouse where early voters can vote. This would be for all Townships and Municipalities in Hillsdale County if their Board decides to accept this cost sharing alternative.