

ELECTIONS AND
REGISTRATIONS

COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

GOVERNMENTAL CENTER

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September 17, 1998

AGENDA: OCTOBER 6, 1998

Board of Supervisors
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Re: BOARD MEETING ON ELECTION DAY

Dear Members of the Board,

During the last several years it has become increasingly difficult to recruit and retain pollworkers. One week prior to the June 1998 election we had over 50 vacant positions and were concerned we would not be able to open some polling places. On Election Day we were still recruiting people who were answering our help wanted ad in the newspaper. One of the resources that we have been using is the county employee workforce. Although county employees make excellent pollworkers, a number of departments are not able to provide employees because Election Day is the same day your Board has its regular hearings. It is believed that if your Board canceled the Board hearings for November 3, 1998, we would be able to recruit twenty to thirty additional employees to work at the polling places.

The cause for the flight from this public service can be blamed on a number of factors, not the least of which is the increased difficulty and complexity of the pollworker's responsibilities. When I first started in this business a few years ago, a person's name was either on the list and could vote or not on the list and could not vote. Now, there are numerous options for a voter if their name is not on the roster—cancelled voters, pending voters, inactive voters, fail-safe voters or a provisional ballot voter. And with the increased absentee voting, the pollworkers must know the difference between a lost, spoiled, surrendered or voted absentee ballot. The Election Officer's manual used to be less than ten pages. It is now over fifty pages.

Along with the issue of just filling positions at the polling place is the difficulty of recruiting skilled and competent inspectors, the one in charge of the polling place. We have discovered that county employees invariably have the essential basic skills that insure a well run polling place. As a result it is our goal to recruit more county employees to be inspectors. However, during the recruitment for the November 1998 election, we have discovered a number of departments are unable to provide because of their involvement with board hearings. It is believed that canceling the November 3, 1998 Board Hearings will make an additional 20 to 30 employees available to work at the polling places.

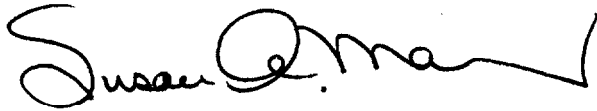
It is therefore RECOMMENDED that your Board cancel the November 3, 1998 Board hearings and reschedule the items for the next Tuesday.

Sincerely,



Richard W. Bedal
County Clerk-Recorder

RECOMMENDED:



SUSAN A. MAURIELLO
County Administrative Officer