

FAQs: Canvass Process

Q: When there are no municipal offices on the ballot on April 5 and we have only one reporting unit, and we have outstanding ballots, it seems that the Clerk and two others cannot comprise the MBOC which has to be held not later than 9 a.m. on Monday following the election. Why can't the Clerk be one of the 3 MBOC when they are not on the ballot in a single reporting unit municipality?

A: Municipalities with only one reporting unit may use a "mini-MBOC" to tally any late-arriving ballots consisting of the clerk, chief inspector and one other inspector.

Q: Why do you need the age of election inspectors?

A: It's a federal reporting requirement.

Q: I have 7 different school districts do I have to give each school district a copy of the poll book - right now none of them require it?

A: You need to provide each school district with a copy of the poll list. You can scan it and provide it electronically. The school district cannot conduct their canvass properly without a copy of the poll list.

Q: Can the MBOC meet the night of the election provided there are no outstanding or provisional ballots?

A: Yes, they can. You need to provide proper notice of the meeting.

Q: Would your minutes include the names of the electors whose ballots you are processing?

A: For late-arriving ballots? No, names of voters should not be included in the minutes.

Q: When using Election Inspectors to canvass the results, is a separate oath of office needed? Or just for the MBOC which meets later to process late arriving ballots.

A: Yes, two separate positions, two separate oaths of office.

Q: Is it okay to use a Chief Inspector or a poll worker as an MBOC member if the Clerk doesn't live in the municipality, or should we stay away from that since they also work the election?

A: Yes.

Q: Does a locked room work for a security for those ballots as they arrive?

A: Yes.

Q: In the Election Administration Manual, Post-Election Activities, Composition of Municipal Board of Canvassers, it does not state that in the event municipal clerk is appointed and not elected and does not live in the municipality they are not qualified to be part of the MBOC. If this is what clerks are following, how would they have the correct information? Is this just assumed?

A: It's a distinction that we have made in the last year that has not been updated in the manual. It will be part of the next revision.

Q: I'm sorry I came into this late, but isn't the MBOC also considered an MBOC on election night if they are certifying school results? I think you should clarify this. Thank you.

A: The MBOC certifies municipal election results. The MBOC does not certify school results. The School District Board of Canvassers certifies school results. The Local Board of Canvassers (election inspectors) tally school district results, along with results for all other offices on the ballot.

Q: Please clarify "Take Minutes" of the MBOC. What exactly are we supposed to be recording on election night? (Besides all of the paper work already needed.)

A: Minutes are a written record of a meeting. They detail the events of the meeting and may include a list of attendees, when the MBOC convened, adjourned, etc.

Q: Some of the paperwork for the MBOC requires the signature of the Clerk; if I am not a resident, should I still sign?

A: A non-resident clerk cannot be a member of the MBOC. The only document a non-resident clerk could sign is the certification on the GAB-106AP: "No absentee ballots were returned and no provisional ballots rehabilitated. Election night results stand."

Q: When will we be able to enter our GAB-191 from February election?

A: The GAB-191 is completed for each spring election in April and each general election in November. It is not completed for any other primary or election, unless the GAB asks directly for that information.

Q: Does WisVote have the capability to create an absentee ballot log by reporting unit yet when we have multiple reporting units?

A: Currently, WisVote does not have the capability to generate an absentee ballot log by reporting unit. The GAB has received many requests for a "canned" absentee ballot log report by reporting unit and will work on making it available for future elections. The current work around is to export the absentee ballot log to an excel spreadsheet and combine the wards that comprise each reporting unit.

Q: What is a Reporting Unit?

A: Election results are reported by "reporting units." A reporting unit may be a ward or a group of wards. A reporting unit must consist of whole wards with like districts, with the possible exception of school districts. If school districts run along ward lines, the "like wards" include the school district. If not, the "splits" are just different ballot styles.

Q: Just to clarify - a reporting unit is the number of polling places?

A: No, that's not the definition. See above.

Q: Returned absentee ballots are to be stored in a sealed ballot container? What if you get one, one day and two the next?

A: We mean a secure container that you can unseal or unlock to add additional ballots as they come in.

Q: If the clerk is a full time clerk with the municipality, is his/her time included in GAB-191?

A: No.

Q: We are a Town, if we have no Town offices or referenda on the ballot; we do not need an MBOC? If so, do we have to reconvene for late arriving absentee or provisional ballots? I thought MBOC always had to convene even though most of the ballots are for other than Town business.

A: It used to be just for certifying your municipal offices and referenda. If there are no municipal offices or referenda on the ballot, you may still have to reconvene to handle any late arriving ballots.

Q: Then, you aren't certifying at the municipal level the school results?

A: The local board of canvassers tallies the results. The School District Board of Canvassers certifies school district results.

Q: Also, what do we do with these "minutes" of the MBOC?

A: Keep them with your files; they don't have to be transmitted to any other unit of government. They should be kept with the GAB-106 for the retention period of 10 years.

Q: I have 20 election inspectors on Election Day and we act at the local MBOC on election night. How many inspectors do I need for the reconvened MBOC for late arriving ballots?

A: Three: The clerk (if a resident), the chief inspector and another inspector.

Q: Do you certify a local referendum question on the summary statement?

A: If by "local" you mean municipal, yes. The MBOC certifies the results of all municipal offices and municipal referenda.

Q: I stepped out to issue an absentee ballot, so I'm sorry if I missed this: Should MBOC members sign an oath of office specific to MBOC?

A: Members of the MBOC must file an oath. If they are also inspectors, they sign an oath for that office. Two separate positions = two separate oaths.

Q: I have 3 reporting units, are you saying the election inspectors are not the MBOC on election night?

A: The MBOC is the clerk and two qualified electors of the municipality as chosen by the clerk, which may be election inspectors.

Q: May the Town charge the copy cost of the poll book for the school district to the school district?

A: No. The law requires that the municipality provide it to the school district.

Q: So if I understood David correctly, if the clerk is not a resident of their municipality, they are not to serve on the MBOC, even if there are different reporting units and the slide in this presentation says that the MBOC for multiple reporting units is the clerk and 2 qualified electors?

A: That's correct.

Q: For the "Mini-MBOC" does the clerk need to be a qualified voter of the municipality? Can an appointed clerk living outside the municipality sit on the mini-MBOC?

A: Yes, the clerk must be a qualified elector of the municipality, so no, a non-resident clerk can't serve on the mini-MBOC.

Q: But I need the distinctions for a combined Type B-D notice.

A: Those are published at the same time, but I can't recall seeing them combined. School Districts, by school district law, combine these notices.

Q: Since when do we need to give the school district a copy of the absentee ballot log? Is it necessary if our school district does not require it?

A: It's always been required. The school district needs a copy of the log to conduct their canvass correctly.

Q: So what if you have 2 wards because they are for different counties? Do we have to have 2 MBOC?

A: The MBOC is a municipal entity. The fact that the municipality lies in two different counties does not require you to have two separate MBOCs. The results go to two different counties.

Q: What is a "certified" copy of the inspectors' statement and poll list?

A: A copy of the document accompanied by a separate statement from the clerk indicating it's a true and correct copy of the original.

Q: Why are costs of elections required?

A: Because of the number of questions we received about the fiscal impact of special elections, G.A.B. Director Kevin Kennedy issued the data requirement to get more accurate information about election costs.

Q: So the County also receives a copy of the municipality MBOC?

A: If you mean the Statement of the MBOC (GAB-106AP), yes the county and school districts receive a copy. If you mean the Canvass of Municipal Offices and/or Referenda, (GAB-106), no. The municipal canvass pertains only to municipal offices or referenda and is retained by the municipality. Nobody else needs a copy.

Q: Since it is sometimes difficult to find an election inspector to come to town hall after 4 p.m. on a Friday or before 9 a.m. on a Monday, could the oath for election inspectors also include oath for MBOC...in case they would be needed to serve in that way. The MBOC process is covered in our election inspector training.

A: You should not have election inspectors take an oath for an office unless they are actually serving in that office.

Q: Please clarify the seal number on the statement of MBOC?

A: There is no place on the GAB-106 for checking the seal numbers. This is a step in the canvass that should be documented in the minutes.

Q: I do not understand what the members are verifying when you state to verify 5 inspector's statement or 10%, please explain that bullet point further.

A: The MBOC should review 5 Inspectors' Statements or 10% of the total Inspectors' Statements, whichever is greater. The review should include checking the voting equipment security seal check was completed both before the polls opened and before the results tape was printed. If you have fewer than 5 inspector statements, you would review all of them.

Q: We have four school districts. One of the school districts has 4 registered voters. Do they have to have the whole poll list or can they receive the pages with their school district voters?

A: Technically they should get the entire poll book so they can determine if any errors were made in the reporting unit that would affect their contests.

Q: Let's clarify the combined ballots please!!! Municipal clerks get confused about separating paper ballots to the school clerks!

A: If separate hand-count paper ballots are used, the school district ballots should be bagged separately and routed to whoever is responsible for storing these ballots for the retention period. By default, this is the school district. However, many county and school district clerks have an agreement by which the county will retain these materials on their behalf.

Q: She just said that two different machines qualify as different reporting units. "If you have to add anything together from two different machines..." So everyone would have at least two reporting units if they have an Eagle and a touch screen?

A: I misspoke. Some polling places have two reporting units—meaning each reporting unit would have more than one optical scan machine. But, simply adding the DRE results and the optical scan results does not mean you have two separate reporting units.

Q: wait...we have three ballot styles, two ballot styles are in one ward. We only have one reporting unit for that ward because we report by county supervisor. Are you telling us that we are supposed to be reporting by ballot style? That would mean our 192 voters who are in Pulaski get their own reporting unit?

A: While we generally recommend that there is only one ballot style per reporting unit (makes it easier if there is a recount), we know that this is not always the case. If your municipality has

more than one reporting unit, you need to have a separate Municipal Board of Canvass (MBOC.) If you only have one reporting unit, the election inspectors serve as the MBOC. School districts are not usually considered in determining reporting units unless school district lines run along ward lines.

Q: I do not believe that is correct. I do not think that reporting units have anything to do with ballot styles; it is how results are reported.

A: While we generally recommend that there is only one ballot style per reporting unit (makes it easier if there is a recount), we know that this is not always the case. If your municipality has more than one reporting unit, you need to have a separate Municipal Board of Canvass (MBOC.) If you only have one reporting unit, the election inspectors serve as the MBOC. School districts are not usually considered in determining reporting units unless school district lines run along ward lines.

Q: If I have three wards, each with a different City Alderperson, does that mean I have three reporting units? Even if I combine all other results to report to the County? Can I still have one poll book??

A: In order to combine two or more wards into one reporting unit, each ward must be made up of like districts (with the possible exception of school district). See the Election Administration Manual (page 253) for a more thorough explanation with examples.