

Cathedral Pines Metropolitan District May 2, 2023 Regular Election Compliance and Best Practices Report

Completed by Teak Simonton; Designated Election Official

General

I was appointed as the Designated Election Official by the Board of Directors of the Cathedral Pines Metropolitan District (CPMD) in December of 2022 to administer the May 2, 2023 Regular Election in which there were two open seats for Directors for four-year terms.

Walker Schooler District Managers (WSDM) group assisted with election tasks which were reasonably conducted within Colorado Springs. They assisted with posting helpful and required forms on the district website, receiving voted ballot packets from voters, posting polling place signs and posting results on Election Night. They were responsive and timely with any tasks for which their help was needed.

Statutory Compliance and Deadlines Met:

All required deadlines were met as follows:

- Voter lists requested from Clerk and Recorder for self-nomination emails and mailing; December 3, 2022.
- Election judges recruited and retained; December of 2022. None of the election judges lived within the CPMD, but all had election experience with El Paso County.
- Self-nomination form and election FAQs posted on website by January 1, 2023.
- Call for self-nomination letters and emails sent to homes with one or more active registered voters and posted on the district website; January 23, 2023.
- Publication of call for self-nomination in the Colorado Springs Gazette; week of January 23, 2023.
- Self-nominations for four candidates reviewed, verified, approved and sent to the Secretary of State.
- Mail ballot plan posted on district website; February 28, 2023.
- Ballot content certified; March 3, 2023.
- Ballots sent to UOCAVA voters (Uniform and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act); March 8, 2023 per federal law requirements of no later than 45 days before the election.
- Voter lists and property owner lists received, reviewed for eligibility and sent to printer; March 14, 2023.

- Election process and requirements review with WSDM team; March 22, 2023.
- Ballots mailed to all eligible voters; April 10, 2023
- Notice posted at WSDM offices, the Lodge at Cathedral Pines and published in the Colorado Springs Gazette; April 10, 2023.
- Judge training session held; April 27, 2023.
- Polls opened at WSDM offices and the Lodge at Cathedral Pines from 7 a.m. – 7 p.m., May 2, 2023.
- Unofficial Results posted at WSDM offices and the Lodge at Cathedral Pines after the polls closed and votes were tallied; May 2, 2023.

All required future deadlines will be met as follows:

- May 10th is the deadline for UOCAVA ballots to be received and counted.
- Canvass review, recount if desired and certification will take place on May 11, 2023.
- Candidates winning board seats will be notified and provided with Certificates of Election on May 11, 2023 electronically, and subsequently by mail.
- Official election results will be posted on the district website, posted at both previously mentioned locations and provided to the Canvass Board.
- Important records and documents will be provided by statutory retention requirements as follows:

25 Month Records (retained until June 2, 2025)

- ✓ Self-nomination forms
- ✓ Judge acceptance and oath forms
- ✓ Undeliverable ballot packets
- ✓ Watcher appointments
- ✓ Pollbook
- ✓ Voted ballots
- ✓ Ballot stubs
- ✓ Returned ballot envelopes
- ✓ Seal logs
- ✓ Tally forms

Permanent Records

- ✓ Canvass Board certified results
- ✓ Publication affidavits
- ✓ Certificates of Election for winning candidates

Security and Transparency:

All seals used were numbered, tamper resistant and verified by two individuals on each seal log.

- Ballots, secrecy sleeve / instruction sheets and return envelopes were formatted and printed by Gran Farnum Printing in Glenwood Springs, CO. I have used this

print house for dozens of elections and their precision, attention to detail and customer service are exceptional.

- Gran Farnum received the mailing list of voters from me in early March, 2023 and mailed ballots to all eligible voters on April 10, 2023.
- A ballot box was placed at WSDM offices, on which there were three numbered seals placed, witnessed and verified by two people. Voters who chose to deliver their voted ballots in person did so, and once it was confirmed that their ballot was signed, and notation was made in the pollbook, they deposited their voted ballot into the box.
- After the first post office mail pickup on April 13th, there was a numbered security seal placed over the opening seam of the WSDM office's mail box key box, and these seals were recorded and witnessed by two people – a team member from WSDM and the courier each day thereafter through Election Day.
 - Ecton Espenlaub helped as courier from April 13 – April 26. Trish Ghee agreed to be the courier April 27, 28, May 1 and 2. She was unable to help on April 27, and this was not known until it was too late to find a replacement, so I instructed the District Managers to retrieve the mail with two staff members, following all security protocols related to removing the keys from the sealed key box.
- Unvoted ballot inventory (for replacement ballots and new registrant ballots) was stored in a sealed and secure location at WSDM offices – with a seal log enclosed inside. WSDM did not have occasion to issue any new ballots for voters so the inventory was unchanged throughout the election cycle.
- On Election Day at the Lodge at Cathedral Pines, all election judges confirmed that the ballot box at that location was empty, and the box was sealed with numbered seals, and seal log completed by two judges and enclosed inside the box.
- At 5:45 p.m. on Election Night, one of the election judges; Michael Shoback and I drove to the WSDM offices, waited until the polls closed at 7 p.m., retrieved the sealed ballot box and returned with this box to the Lodge at Cathedral Pines.
- When we returned, the two remaining judges had closed the polls, and had broken the seals, as instructed by me, on the ballot box at that location, and had begun to open the envelopes for the tally.
- The ballot box from WSDM offices was also opened and the total quantity of ballots was verified against the ballot return logs and the pollbook. Everything balanced, and we had 151 total ballots as expected.
- Election judges are sworn to secrecy related to any knowledge they might have about voter confidentiality while they open envelopes and extract voted ballots, that said, it has always been my practice to require exacting procedures to do everything possible to eliminate the possibility of any such knowledge. The process by which ballots were removed, quantities verified, tally conducted and voted ballots secured was as follows:

1. Judges slit open ballot envelopes and removed folded ballots - handing them to another judge to open and lay flat (upside down with stub number and choices not visible), without looking at or announcing the voter's names on the envelopes.
2. The flat ballots were counted to ensure we had every ballot removed from each envelope and the quantity expected confirmed; 151.
3. The ballots were turned over, and one judge read the votes, one judge and I recorded the votes, comparing our totals along the way, and the last judge observed our marking the votes for each candidate.
4. Numbered stubs were removed.
5. Ballots were divided into three security bags, seals recorded on seal logs enclosed within, and sealed. The 6 quarantined ballots were put in a separate security bag, seal recorded and sealed. *
6. These sealed packages with ballots enclosed will be opened during Canvass, and seals verified by the Canvass Board.
7. The remaining 6 ballots, and any returned UOCAVA ballots will be added to the Unofficial Results and the final total votes received by each candidate determined.

*Due to the possibility of later returning UOCAVA ballots, it is standard practice to hold back a small number of voted ballots to mask the votes of the UOCAVA voters and preserve the confidentiality of their votes. To this end, we pulled a semi random 6 ballots out to mask any making sure we had some votes for each candidate. You will quickly understand that this means each candidate will AT A MINIMUM receive one additional vote when we canvass.

Voted ballot security was a top concern and the protocols put in place were significant to ensure all ballots were received properly and that the ultimate results of the election had complete integrity.

Questions about processes and requirements from candidates, Board Directors, Canvass Board members and watchers were addressed expeditiously and thoroughly.

Throughout the election cycle, updates were provided to the board, candidates, management and district counsel related to deadlines, milestones and procedures.

