TO**:** Anoka County Board of Commissioners and Staff

FROM: Anoka County Election Integrity Team (ACEIT)

DATE: July 11, 2023

SUBJECT**:** 2nd Request to Hand Count Select 2023 Elections

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**Introduction:**

On June 27th , we requested that the Anoka County Commissioners and their Elections Team collaborate with the responsible city and/or school board clerks and staff to implement a hand count process for the upcoming November 7, 2023 elections of 2 Mayors, 5 City Council Members, and 12 School Board Members. **This request has not changed even with the new legislation that the state is making effective in 2024 for the election of state positions.**

Additionally, recently we’ve learned that some portion of this Board have misinformed citizens regarding the option of hand counting. It has been stated that *state law recently changed prohibiting counties with machines from switching back to hand counting*.

* That statement is incorrect.
* The fact is that hand counting is not prohibited in the new legislation.
* The fact is that if machines have been used to count ballots/results previously, they must continue to be used.
* The fact is that there is no prohibition of hand counting, which can be done in parallel to the machine counting.

**Considerations:**

* I think it is important to clarify these three key points regarding the legislation.
  1. The new law doesn’t apply to 2023.
  2. The new law also doesn’t apply to our 2023 elections because they are not for state positions.
  3. With regard to beyond 2023, the new legislation does not state that hand counts are prohibited even if machines have been used in the past. A parallel process of hand counting can still be done, even in state elections.
* You, as County Commissioners, DO HAVE the ability and opportunity to authorize and/or influence the institution of hand counting in any/all elections held in Anoka County.
* We need you to better understand this responsibility and to hear We The People (who you were elected to represent) as we ask again for the hand counting of all 2023 elections in Anoka County.
* As we stated on June 27th:
  + - ***Hand counting of elections is a tabulation method provided for*** by Minnesota Statute and supported in our state, county, city, township, and school board election guides.
    - Hand counting ***engages the citizens*** of each precinct in the election process.
    - Hand counting ***promotes transparency*** of vote tabulation and results.
    - Hand counting requires ***less technology devices*** and ***eliminates digital/access risks*** to tabulation inaccuracies.
    - Hand counting ***eliminates significant time and steps as well as cost***.
* We should add the point that hand counting is a great double-check of our machine results when machines are used.

**Conclusions/Requests:**

* Hand counting ballots is a viable process used elsewhere across our state, nation, and world; and it is provided for in our Minnesota statutes.
* Hand counting is simpler, has fewer security vulnerabilities, is a remedy to the public’s concerns regarding transparency of tabulation. It engages citizens in process, which also promotes public confidence.
* We make a 2nd request that the Anoka County Commissioners and their staff collaborate with the responsible city and school board clerks and staff to implement a hand count process for the November 7, 2023 elections occurring within Anoka County.