MEMORANDUM
TO: Anoka County Board of Commissioners and Staff
FROM: Anoka County Election Integrity Team (ACEIT)
DATE: May 23, 2023
SUBJECT: The Benefit of Publishing Cast Vote Records, by Erik van Mechelen
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Introduction
Anoka County’s ES&S tabulators (mostly DS200s), automatically store cast vote records during elections and they has been withheld from the public since 2020. If released, it will contribute to a more data-backed citizen-led audit where current processes fall short of truly auditing all key components of local elections.

Analysis
1. Cast Vote Records have [a standard data format specification](https://pages.nist.gov/CastVoteRecords/) under the National Institute of Science and Technology (NIST) within the US Dept of Commerce, with [these specific standards](https://nvlpubs.nist.gov/nistpubs/SpecialPublications/NIST.SP.1500-103.pdf).

2. Cast Vote Records are part of [the Election Assistance Commission’s Voluntary Voting System Guidelines since 2005](https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/eac_assets/1/28/VVSG.1.0_Volume_1.PDF), which Minnesota has adopted making Cast Vote Records a requirement of any certified election equipment used in Minnesota.

3. Cast Vote Records refer to: 1) Ballot images, and 2) the interpretative file derived from the ballot images.

4. There is no Minnesota statute preventing the release of the Cast Vote Records, therefore they are public election data (government work product) under Government Data Practices Chapter 13.

5. No voter identifying information exists on the Cast Vote Records.

6. Only 1 county in Minnesota has fully released Cast Vote Records from 2020.

7. During a nationwide analysis of hundreds of county-level Cast Vote Records, patterns emerged within states and between states, detailed on [FingerprintsofFraud.com](http://fingerprintsoffraud.com/) as well as [VoteDatabase.com](http://votedatabase.com/).

8. For an example of transparency, Dodge County, Wisconsin [releases all Cast Vote Records on its website](https://www.co.dodge.wi.gov/departments/departments-a-d/county-clerk/election-information/election-results/election-results-2022).

9. Dodge County’s many thousands of ballot images took up only about 8 gigabytes of space on a USB drive.

Conclusion
1. Cast Vote Records can be taken from the DS200s (the tabulators), from the removable media (the USB sticks), or from the reports generated by the Election Management System (ES&S Electionware).

2. The Cast Vote Records should be released from recent elections including 2020 and 2022. However, even if they are, the public would likely remain suspicious given the lag time since the election. Cast Vote Records elsewhere have been proven to be unusable due to manipulation.

3. Cast Vote Record publication is the simplest first step toward basic transparency in just one component of the overall election ecosystem—tabulation—which is the third of four steps after voter registration and voter validation, and before reporting.