

TIOGA COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

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Commissioners

Vera Lin Layman
James C. E. Wahls

Deputy Commissioners

Kelly A. Johnson
Sandra R. Cooper



2022 Annual Report to Tioga County

January 27, 2023

In 2022, the Board of Elections faced significant challenges, both anticipated and unexpected. In spite of these challenges during a contentious election year, our team succeeded in overcoming what was thrown at us, and we accomplished much. Below is a brief recap of the year.

- Two bouts of redistricting
 - Reapportionment of political jurisdictions and election districts in Tioga County, and applying changes to the voter database, went smoothly early in the year
 - Litigation of state-drawn districts resulted in the redrawing of congressional and state senate districts by a special master, causing a delay for those primary elections while this redistricting was completed
- Staffing changes
 - Unexpected retirement of Commissioner Toombs in February, who was succeeded by her deputy Lin Layman
 - Hired Kelly Johnson as Republican Deputy Commissioner in April, and filled two new part-time Election Clerk positions in May
 - Hired brand new slate of four seasonal election workers for post-election recanvassing, plus two new voting machine delivery drivers
- Beta test of upgrades to NTS voter registration software
 - Challenges of learning and working with new software while it was still in development, finding and reporting bugs
 - Voter street files changed from address ranges to address points, with geocoding of every address – through diligent research and with help of GIS Manager, we made corrections to a lot of address files
- State & Local Primary Elections held on June 28th
 - Democratic Primaries for Governor & Lt. Governor
 - Republican Primaries for Governor, County Court Judge, Owego Council Member
 - Conservative Primary for County Court Judge
- Change to absentee law effective July 1st requiring postage-paid return envelopes for absentee applications and ballots

- A state-aid grant was implemented to reimburse the BOE for costs necessary to implement this change
- Delayed Congressional Primary simultaneous with Congressional Special Election, held on August 23rd
 - Democratic Primary for 19th Congressional District
 - Special Election for 23rd Congressional District to fill vacant seat
 - This was especially challenging for various reasons:
 - Very complicated – not only was it two different types of elections at one time, one election was for the newly drawn election districts, and one was for the old election districts that no longer existed; it was a herculean task to sort out which voters got which ballot(s)
 - Due to this extra election, BOE staff had to cancel vacation plans, work another additional seventy five hours that every election demands, which full-time BOE staff are not provided compensation for but is required
 - Due to the **hard work, dedication**, and **cooperation** of BOE employees, election inspectors, and election vendors, we were able to rise to the challenge and successfully complete this seemingly impossible task
- Remaining federal grant funding from the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) was used to help cover expenses for the additional election, and to replace our dysfunctional election supply bags
- Election Inspector recruitment and training was successful in 2022; we had enough workers trained so that all poll sites could be sufficiently staffed in accordance with statute, even with some substitutes available
- General Election Day was November 8th
 - On the ballot: Governor & Lt. Governor, Comptroller, Attorney General, US Senator, Representative in Congress, State Senator, Member of Assembly, County Court Judge, Coroner, various town offices, a statewide proposition, and two local propositions
 - Immediately preceding the election, partisan litigation about new absentee canvassing laws tested the working relationship of our election commissioners; ultimately, party differences were put aside, the laws followed and together we ran a successful election
- Once again, the year was closed out with the passage of additional election reform laws
 - Voter registration deadline was reduced from 25 days to 10 days prior to an election, resulting in a voter registration “golden day” – a voter can

- register to vote on the first day of early voting, then vote the same day and have their ballot counted
- Rules for affidavit ballots were changed so that if a voter votes by affidavit in the wrong jurisdiction within their county, their votes can still be counted for the races in which they were eligible to vote

2023 Goals:

- Increase Inspector numbers to add experienced inspectors for the 2024 Elections.
- Explore on line training for part of the inspector training.
- Continue to train and cross train office staff as upgrades to our registration system, ePoll Books and ballot creation are rolled out.