

MEMORANDUM

To: Fort Bragg Council Members and City Manager

From: Karen Brinson Bell on behalf of the Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center

Date: August 21, 2018

Subject: Election Costs

Based upon our experience conducting ranked choice voting (RCV) elections and providing analysis for other jurisdictions regarding this voting method, the Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center has identified the following cost considerations and options for implementing RCV in Fort Bragg, CA.

	Option 1: Coordination with Mendocino County	Option 2: Fort Bragg administers with RCV capable equipment	Option 3: Fort Bragg administers manually
Description	Mendocino County currently uses AccuVote OS to tabulate by-mail ballots and administers Fort Bragg elections. This option would continue that practice. The County would create the ballot, which may have limited RCV ballot design options, and administer the mailing of ballots. Once the ballots are returned, the County would use cast vote records generated by the voting system to tabulate the votes using third-party software* or provide the file for the City to contract with a third party for tabulation.	The City of Fort Bragg leases (or purchases) RCV-capable voting equipment and contracts for ballot design. City administers election in full.	The City of Fort Bragg contracts for ballot design with the County or vendor. City manually counts the ballots and uses a spreadsheet tool, similar to Minneapolis, MN, to aid in tabulation of multi-winner contests. City administers election in full.

Cost Factors	<p>Low administration costs similar to previous elections; recurring cost of third-party tabulation until County acquires a new voting system with built-in RCV capabilities.</p>	<p>Administration cost to be determined; recurring fees with each election. May be fulfilled by City Clerk or other personnel.</p> <p>The City would contract with a certified voting system company to design and print ballots for an all-mail election. ADA voting equipment and a scanner would be needed for each election – lease or purchase option.</p> <p>If selected voting equipment does not have built-in RCV capabilities, then a third-party tabulation entity would need to be contracted* for a limited number of days to tabulate results on Election Day and through the certification process.</p>	<p>Administration cost to be determined; recurring fees with each election. May be fulfilled by City Clerk or other personnel.</p> <p>Election costs would include ballot printing and mailing of ballots.</p> <p>Development costs may be associated with the spreadsheet needed for tabulation of multi-winner contests. This may require contracting with third-party vendor, though Minneapolis has freely shared this tool in the past, and the spreadsheet may only need minor, if any, modifications for use by Fort Bragg.</p>
*Additional Considerations	<p>The Ranked Choice Voting Resource Center has developed the Universal RCV Tabulator as free, open-source software. This tabulation software could serve as the third-party tabulation system or for audit/verification of another system.</p> <p>All options may require review, approval, and/or certification by the California Elections Division or other state requirements.</p>		

If Fort Bragg opts to acquire equipment, a lease may be more price advantageous. The City would set lease terms with a certified vendor, so we are unable to indicate specific costs associated with a lease agreement. However, we are aware of the following purchase estimates from two certified vendors, which may vary by the size of the jurisdiction:

Digital Scanner for 3,000 ballots (2 recommended)	\$4,000 to \$7,000 per unit
Ballot printing (per election)	\$0.38 to \$0.40/ballot
Election coding/ballot design (per election)	\$10,000/election (may vary by jurisdiction)
Vendor on-site assistance (per election)	\$1,500 to \$2,000 per day

Depending on the vendor and the system selected, an additional voting unit with ADA compliant features may be needed. A unit for this purpose costs between \$4,000 and \$6,000 to purchase. It may also be possible to borrow this unit from the County.

Whether the City opts to purchase or lease voting equipment, ballot printing and election coding/ballot design are recurring costs. Personnel and postage would also need to be considered.

A total estimate for purchasing (not leasing) equipment and administering one election with all-mail balloting is likely between \$19,000 and \$27,000. These figures should be confirmed with the vendor in order to be specific for Fort Bragg's needs and election processes. Furthermore, this range represents the initial cost associated with the purchase of equipment. The annual cost, if leased, would be less but would be recurring.

Please let us know if you have questions or if additional information is needed.

