

Notes from observing ballot processing at Boulder County Clerk's office 10-22-12

Jim August
1605 Denison Cir
Longmont, CO 80503
303-776-4514
303-442-2622 (cell)
jim@jfaugust.us

In the following notes, the areas of concern are highlighted in BOLD face

1. About 8:29am I entered the processing area. Dan Gould from the Democrat part was there.
2. About 8:44 I requested signature verification report from both Sidney and Mary Taylor. They said they would have to check and get back to me later. About 9:27 Mary Taylor said that the party could request and get reports and that Dan Martin would be able to do that for the Republicans. So I didn't get any report.
3. About 8:58, 6 trays of envelopes with red tops were brought into the first Signature Verification (SV-1) room. I was told these are "Undeliverable" ballots. I estimate 400-500 per tray for a total of about 2, 400 to 3,000. I haven't seen any other trays of undeliverable ballots. About 10:13 they stated moving the "Undeliverable" sticker labels that were covering the addresses to the left side of the envelopes. Starting about 10:50 in the SV-2 area the bar codes on these envelopes were hand scanned one at a time into the "Computer System".
4. About 9:00, in the second Signature Verification (SV-2) room they were picking out envelopes with what appeared as black bar at the top. I am guessing these are the envelopes processed Friday the 19th. I wasn't able to find out what the black top meant.
5. About 10:09 in the "Opening Area" envelopes that I assume were processed Friday, were being hand counted and put in bundles of 150.
6. About 10:43 started cutting open envelopes with machine in SV-1 area.
7. About 10:59 2 teams each with 2 bipartisan members started removing sleeves with ballots from the mailing envelope. One member removed the sleeve, which was then handed to the second team member. The first member called out the District code(?) on the mailing label and the second member verified the ballot had the same code on it. Most of the time this could be done without removing the ballot from the security sleeve. In a few cases the ballot had to be removed since it was folded wrong in the sleeve. There were a few cases where the sleeve was missing. There was recounting at various steps in this process.

8. Starting about 11:27 these bipartisan teams started removing the ballots from the sleeves. The ballots were then unfolded and bent backwards as need to try to flatten the creases. The ballot were then visually examine for the type of marking that was used. If the marking was other than solid black or blue they were kept separate at this time. In the first batch of 150 opened there were none with wrong district code and there were 2 ballots with the incorrect marking. After recounting all parts, the good ballots were then placed back in the tray and the envelopes and sleeve were bundled and place in a different location on the floor in the Opening area. The questionable ballots were placed in a folder that was then placed in the tray with the good ballots. A multi page tabulation report was included with each with its 150 ballots. Through out the day I observed various teams and noted as many as 5 miss-marked ballots in each batch of 150. By counting the bundles of emptied envelopes I noticed 25 batches of 150 were processed by quitting time about 4:30.
9. **About 1:42 while observing signature verification at station 10, in the SV-2 area I noticed the signature for “Fern Bowman” was printed in the top signature location but the bottom had a signed name. The status was changed from “Signature’ to “Good”. I think Larry saw this also.**
10. About 1:57 while observing signature verification on station 11 I observed 7 groups of screens. A group started with at least 1 rejection and then ended when the next rejection was observed. I saw as few as 2 screens of 4, and as many as 11 screens of 4. So the reject rate was about 1 in 8 to about 1 in 44.
11. **About 2:09 operators of station 10 (V09CR) and 11 (V10CR) noticed the same signature pairs were on both of their screens at the same time. It was then noticed that both screens had the same set of 4 signature pairs. I think it was “Blanken, Peter” whose signature was on the screen at that time. They notified staff who then called in the Bell & Howell technicians who were working on the envelope scanner. They verified the problem. One technician said “”Save and Exit”. That is what the operators did. The technician then logged into both terminals and said that he saved the file for later examination. Then the 2 signature verification operators logged back in and noted they now had different signature on their screens. I think this problem occurred when processing batch 41. I had noticed that a message appeared on the screen of station 3 with “SCORE PC SYSTEM” when this problem occurred on stations 10 & 11.**
12. **About 2:32 while observing signature verification on station 11, the image for “Creck, Elisabeth” VID 7981042 appeared. To me this signature was questionable and the operator called over a supervisor who noted that there was a “Witness” signature so it should be accepted with out any question. Which is what was done. I had noticed that this operator had been viewing most screens in about 4 seconds. This seemed very fast to me. It would generally take about another second for the screen to refresh.**

13. About 3:23 a “SCORE ERROR” message popped up on the screens for stations 4 & 10. I think both had just finished with batch 43. I don’t think there was anyone operating these screens.
14. About 4:15 Envelope Scanner jamming again. After trouble shooting B&H technician found that lower left slot tray on the front was loose. Reseated it then continued ok.
15. Through out the day and as well as Friday there seemed to be a lot of confusion around the envelope scanner. It appeared to be miss sorting and miscounting.
16. About 5:10 they started bringing up the ballot scanners. I was told that an experienced crew would be in at about 5:30
17. About 5:35 I overheard the B&H technicians saying there was a problem with about 1 in 400 counting on the envelope scanner.
18. They distributed 2 trays of 150 ballots per each of the 8 ballot scanners.
19. About 5:50 they started booting the ballot scanner software. The scanners are Kodak model i830.
20. They then started scanning the ballots. The questionable ballots from each batch of 150 were placed differently on top of the good ballots their green strip was visible on the top on the end away from the machine. This may be so the image of the ballot is different in the machine. It appears that each batch may have been scanned several times in different machines. There was some form of spreadsheet on one of the screens for each scanner. I need better eyesight to be able to read through the windows.
21. About 7:28 the B&H technicians were still working on the envelope scanner. I noticed one technician setting on the floor back of the scanner with about 8 small piles of ballot envelopes also on the floor. He was trying to figure out why they were still coming up with wrong counts.
22. I left about 8:00 pm

My primary concerns:

The area of my greatest concern is the signature verification process. We need to develop a plan with specific steps and forms to record and process “Challenges” in a timely manner in order to get something fixed. The “Poll Watchers” for this area need to have great eyesight to be able to read the screens. It might help to have two

watchers (there are ways this can be done), with one looking at the signatures and the other writing down names and / or VIDs. It seems that most signature verification takes place late morning and mid day, but they may change their routine.

The other concern is the reliability of the Bell & Howell envelope scanner, which is also part of the signature verification process. It is scanning the signature, counting envelopes and finding rejected envelopes and sorting for following ballot processing. I have very low confidence in this machine.