



## ARLINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA

<p><b>County Board Agenda Item Meeting of May 5, 2007</b></p>
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**DATE:** April 25, 2007

**SUBJECT:** Appropriation of funds from the General Fund General Contingent to the Electoral Board.

**C. M. RECOMMENDATION:**

Allocate \$361,600 in FY2007 from the General Fund General Contingent (101.91102) to the Electoral Board (101.14401) for the purchase of 110 additional voting machines.

**ISSUE:** None.

**SUMMARY:** The current inventory of voting equipment is insufficient to adequately serve Arlington's voters during the 2008 presidential election, and recently-enacted legislation prohibits Virginia localities from purchasing additional equipment of the type used by Arlington after July 1, 2007.

**BACKGROUND:** The County Board authorized \$613,975 for the lease-purchase of 205 WINvote direct recording electronic (DRE) voting machines and related peripherals in FY2004 and approved an additional \$242,329 in Pay-As-You-Go funds for 104 additional machines in FY2005. The County was reimbursed \$199,750 in FY2005 from funds allocated to the Commonwealth of Virginia through the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to assist localities in the purchase of updated voting equipment.

**DISCUSSION:** The Arlington County Electoral Board and General Registrar are sensitive to public concerns about the integrity of the electoral process and are committed to providing Arlington County voters with a reasonable, workable and reliable solution to allow voters to independently verify their ballots (see attached memorandum). Although voter verified paper audit trails (VVPATs) are now being utilized in some other states, there are at present no national standards defined for such technologies, and none are certified for use in Virginia. The Electoral Board and General Registrar believe the current alternative option, optical scan paper based voting, would be a costly and problematic transition for the County at this time, given the substantial investment in the current electronic machines, including staff and poll worker training and voter education, over the past several years.

The Electoral Board and General Registrar therefore recommend the purchase of 110 additional voting machines in order to help reduce voter wait times during the 2008 presidential election and to provide adequate equipment inventory for the next several years, during which time they

<p>County Manager: _____</p>
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<p>Staff: Linda Lindberg, General Registrar</p>
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will carefully watch the development of changing election technologies and follow federal and state legislation before making recommendations on new election systems.

An analysis of voting machine usage for the November 2004 and 2006 elections, with projections made for voter turnout in November 2008, indicates the conducting of the 2008 election with the current inventory of equipment will result in an unsatisfactory service level (Attachment 1). We consider the service level in 2004 to also be unsatisfactory, and with additional residential growth resulting in the expected addition of two or three precincts within the next year, along with the anticipated high voter interest in the 2008 presidential race, voter wait times and resultant complaints are expected to increase from 2004.

While lines at the polls and voter complaints will always occur during presidential elections, they can be reduced to a more acceptable level by the addition of 110 machines. It is noted that legislation recently signed into law in Virginia prohibits the purchase of additional DRE voting machines after July 1, 2007. The new law will require any voting machine purchases after that date to be optical scan systems.

The Electoral Board and General Registrar recommend that, given Arlington County's prior investment in the current voting system, the most fiscally responsible option at this time would be to increase the inventory of existing equipment. Implementing a new voting system in a presidential election year will not only be costly but also confusing to voters and poll workers. The Electoral Board and General Registrar will continue to monitor state and federal election legislation and will work with the County Board to plan for potential future voting system purchases that provide for the greatest possible integrity and confidence to voters.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** Funding for the purchase of these additional voting machines is requested from the General Fund General Contingent. There is currently a balance of \$909,000 in the General Fund General Contingent account. If this proposal is approved, it is anticipated that there will be an on-going cost of \$10,600 for maintenance and staffing starting FY 2009.

## Attachment 1

### Voting Machine Usage and Projected Requirements for Nov. 2008

ITEM	2004 Presidential	2006 Senate	2008 Est. Presidential (No Additional Machines)	2008 Est. Presidential (110 Additional Machines)
Voting Machines Owned	309	309	309	419
Voting Machines Deployed In Precincts	272	285	285	395
Total Voters Voting	95,219	73,499	100,000	100,000
Total Voters Voting In Precincts	83,172	66,394	85,000	85,000
Average Number of Voters per Machine In Precincts	306	233	298	215
Number of Offices Being Considered	4*	4	5*	5*
Number of State Issues/Questions	2	3	?	?
Number of Local Issues/Questions	4	5	?	?
Total Ballot (Offices + Issues)	10	12	?	?
Service Level	Unsatisfactory	Barely Adequate	Unsatisfactory	Nearly Adequate

\* indicates two seats for School Board, although just one office on ballot