



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

MEETING DATE: October 4, 2004

ITEM NUMBER: IX-1

SUBJECT: Election Day Poll Workers Program

DATE: September 22, 2004

FROM: City Manager

PRESENTATION BY: Steven E. Hayman, Assistant City Manager

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Julie Folcik, Deputy City Clerk (714) 754-5221

RECOMMENDATION:

Approve and authorize the City Manager to implement a policy authorizing City employees to serve as volunteer poll workers through out the City of Costa Mesa, for the November 2, 2004 General Election.

BACKGROUND:

The Orange County Registrar of Voters Office, is responsible for arranging, each election cycle, the "volunteers" that are to be utilized on the election board at each polling location throughout Orange County. For the election in November, there will be 1273 polling places in Orange County and of those there are 43 polling locations within the City of Costa Mesa; two polling places will have more than one precinct board located at the site.

Each precinct election board is required to be staffed with a minimum of four (4) people (an inspector and three clerks). To assist with this tremendous effort a program has been established by the County utilizing County employees as poll workers. At the September 13, 2004, study session a presentation was made by Steve Rodermund, Orange County Registrar of Voters, explaining the County poll worker program and to solicit the City's help in the effort.

Modeled after the State program established in 2001, and pursuant to Government Code Section 19844.7(ATTACHMENT #1), the County of Orange implemented a program (ATTACHMENT #2) by which County employees could volunteer to serve as precinct board members and they would not forfeit any vacation time nor salary for the service on election day. The eligibility was based on the approval of the employee's manager so as to not impact the department's operations and to maintain adequate staffing levels.

ANALYSIS:

The Orange County Registrar of Voters is responsible in arranging for over 7,000 qualified polling workers to work at the precincts on Election Day. It was reported that at each election cycle it becomes increasingly difficult to find the volunteers who are willing/able to serve (currently the average age of a precinct worker is 72 years of age). The County implemented their employee poll worker program in an effort to not only supplement the shortage of constituent volunteers but to meet a goal to guarantee a government worker at each polling location to assist the other poll workers. It is reported that in the upcoming election cycle that approximately 1000 county workers will be trained as part of this program however, an additional 500 workers (City or County) is needed through out the County to adequately staff each polling location and to provide for support personnel.

The cities throughout the County were approached to be a part of the solution by considering and adopting similar programs to that of the State and County, whereby city employees may volunteer their time to work the at a polling location.

The program would require an employee that wishes to volunteer to first acquire the approval by their immediate supervisor, which is necessary in order to maintain basic services and adequate coverage. Assignments that require the City to bring in personnel on an overtime basis to fill shifts would not be granted permission to participate in this program. If approved the "volunteer" would be required to attend a three hour training course and to work a full day at an assigned polling site (typically a 14 hour day) within the City of Costa Mesa. The approved "leave of absence" would be similar to that of jury duty in that vacation time would not need to be utilized by the volunteer/employee for their service however, the stipend paid by the County (\$50.00 for clerk or \$70.00 for an inspector and \$20.00 for training) will not need to be forfeited to the City. Participating employees would be required to show proof of service to receive their normal pay for the date worked. Since this would be a voluntary program no overtime would be paid to the employee for anytime past the regularly scheduled hours.

The union representatives of the Costa Mesa City Employees Association (CMCEA) have been notified of the proposed program and as of yet there have not been any issues of concern raised in relation to the arrangement.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

The City Council may alternatively decide not to approve this program.

FISCAL REVIEW:

There will not be a fiscal impact on the City except for the approval of those city employees' "leave of absence" request, in which case the city is providing a full day's pay for that employee approved for "volunteering" for the election day.

LEGAL REVIEW:

The City Attorney's Office has reviewed the report for appropriateness.

CONCLUSION:

Each election cycle we as voters are reminded of the importance of making our vote count whether it be for local, state or federal issues. In administrating the practices that make the democratic process great we must also understand all that it takes to continue to make this process accessible. The City wishes to take a proactive approach in providing some assistance in this important democratic process by assisting the Orange County Registrar of Voters with the approval of this City Employee Volunteer Poll Worker program for the November 2, 2004 election. It is also requested that the City Council encourage our local constituency to get involved by not only voting but to also volunteer as poll workers on election day.

JULIE FOLICK
Deputy City Clerk

ALLAN ROEDER
City Manager

STEVEN E. HAYMAN
Assistant City Manager

TOM WOOD
Acting City Attorney

DISTRIBUTION: City Council
City Manager
Assistant City Manager
City Attorney

ATTACHMENT: 1. [California Code Section 19844.7](#)
2. [County Poll Worker Information](#)