Rules of Procedure Relating to the Public Inspection of Sensitive Election Documents

Purpose: As the general custodian of election records, Bastrop County Elections Department must balance dual priorities: (1) Providing transparency of the election process by allowing public access for inspection of election records, and (2) ensuring the security and integrity of election records are maintained. This policy establishes procedures as authorized by law to accomplish the dual priorities of document preservation and public access to those documents.

Scope: This policy applies to any member of the public who requests through the Public Information Act to inspect election records.

Definitions: "Documents" refers to any physical records, including, but not limited to, paper ballots, printouts, and election related forms. At times, "documents" and "records" may be used interchangeably.

Policy: 1.0 TIME-PERIOD FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION
Requests to conduct an in-person inspection must be made a minimum of three (3) business days in advance of the desired date of inspection.

Dates will be scheduled based on availability of space and resources. Because the Elections Department is consistently in the process of preparing for or conducting an election, it may be up to 90 days or more before an in-person inspection of documents at the Elections Department can be scheduled. The Elections Department will make every effort to allow an in-person inspection of documents as soon as practicable but cannot guarantee any specific turnaround time for every request.

Pursuant to the Texas Government Code section 552.225(a), requestors have up to 10 business days to complete their inspection of documents and may only do so during normal business hours of the Elections Department. Normal business hours are Monday through Thursday, 8 AM to 5 PM, and Friday, 8 AM to 4 PM, excluding County holidays.

2.0 NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS AND LOG
In order to reasonably monitor the inspection process, the number of persons allowed simultaneous access to the election records is limited to the amount of space, Bastrop County Elections Department staff, and the number of records available.

Bastrop County Elections Department staff has the sole authority to determine the maximum capacity at any given time.

A log of all individuals participating in in-person inspection of election records must be signed by all attendees and will be maintained as part of the election records.
3.0 BASTROP COUNTY ELECTIONS DEPARTMENT STAFF PRESENT
As the general custodian of election records, the Bastrop County Elections Department will have, at a minimum, one staff member present at all times in the room containing the election records while public inspection is taking place.

All interaction with the documents by non-elections personnel will be subject to both video and in-person monitoring by Bastrop County Elections Department Staff. The number of in-person monitor(s) will be equal to the number of persons inspecting sensitive documents. The hourly rate for each in-person monitor(s), as set by the Legislature of the State of Texas in the Texas Public Information Act is $15.00 per hour, billable by the minute.

4.0 WRITING INSTRUMENTS
Pens, pencils, and/or other marking devices are prohibited in the room containing election records.

5.0 FOOD AND BEVERAGES
Food and beverages are prohibited in the room containing election records.

6.0 SAFEKEEPING OF RECORDS
No more than one box or container (insomuch as the documents are in boxes or containers) may be simultaneously accessed per table.

All records, including voted ballots, must be kept in the same stacks, containers, or boxes, whichever is applicable, while public inspection is taking place.

Records of any kind may not be removed from the room in which public inspection is taking place.

Bastrop County Elections Department staff will manage the records for inspection and may limit the amount available at any given time to maintain control and security of the documents.

Personally identifiable information or information that could tie a voter's identity to their voting selections must be redacted from all election records prior to public inspection. Public inspection will be conducted on the redacted copies.

7.0 VIDEO AND IMAGES
Those conducting the in-person inspection may use imaging devices to take photos or make copies of the election records (subject to exclusion of records containing personally identifiable information). However, laptops, tablets, or any other electronic devices which contain network capability are not allowed to be connected to any County network. Laptops, tablets, cell phones, and other electronic devices that do not have ethernet ports may be brought into the inspection area. Ethernet cables are strictly prohibited in the inspection area. Any attempt to plug a device into an ethernet jack in the building at any time is prohibited.
Adherence to these guidelines is mandatory. Failure to comply with the policy can result in the Elections Department asking the person to leave and the review of documents being rescheduled to a future date.

Adopted this 26th day of September, 2022.

[Signature]

Paul Pape
Bastrop County Judge

Attest:

[Signature]

Krista Bartsch
Bastrop County Clerk