

ELECTION INSPECTOR NEWSLETTER

Tioga County Board of Elections

April 2021



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Tioga County Elections and COVID-19

It is probably safe to say that the year 2020 is a year we are all happy to have behind us. Despite a flurry of changes to our election process in order to cope with COVID-19, an extraordinary presidential election, and lengthy post-election litigation, we made it through. As always, we could not have pulled off a successful election without all of you!

Here is a brief recap of the challenges and successes we faced in 2020:

After COVID-19 hit in March 2020, we faced a countywide **lockdown**, and our office reduced on-site staff

while still having to find a way to complete our regular duties.

The NY **Presidential Primary** was postponed to the same day as the Federal, State and Local primaries, then it was cancelled, and then it was un-cancelled by court order. We had to send a **mass mailing** of absentee applications to all eligible voters for the primary, and **absentee voting greatly expanded** so we purchased a specialized high-speed ballot scanner and software to accommodate the volume. Meanwhile, **election inspector attrition** due to concern over getting sick (understandably) left us with only 50% of our usual workers to run the primary. On top of this, inspectors were hit with additional duties and new procedures in response to the pandemic.

Over the summer, the media and other outlets helped with **election inspector recruitment**, but there remain areas (Barton, Spencer, Tioga) where we do not have sufficient workers. Absentee options were further expanded to include an online application.

Temporary election clerks were hired to help manage the absentee load and answer the never-ending phone calls. **High Early Voting turnout** for the General Election helped ease the burden on Election Day. And in spite of all the chaos from high turnout, so many absentees, and COVID-19 restrictions, we still **certified our results on time!**

Post-election, we were involved with the **legal battle** for the 22nd Congressional District seat, and we were fortunate to be the only county in the district where no legal issues were found.

Moving forward into 2021, COVID-19 restrictions will continue, as well as expanded absentee voting options. Additionally, do not be surprised if we see further changes to our election system, with the various election reform bills being proposed at state and federal levels. However, with vaccinations ever increasing, and the contentious 2020 presidential race behind us, hopefully this year will not be so darn stressful! ■

2021 ELECTION DATES

June 22nd: Local Primary

Early Voting: June 12-20

November 2nd: General Election

Early Voting: October 23-31

Polls will be open 6am to 9pm on *each* Election Day.

Please email a commissioner with Early Voting/Election dates you are available to work.

EARLY VOTING INFORMATION

Location: The Tioga County Early Voting Center for 2021 elections will be located at the Tioga County Board of Elections, 1062 State Route 38, Owego, NY.

Early Voting Days and Times:

DAY	TIME
<u>1: Saturday (10th day prior to election)</u>	<u>9 AM – 2 PM</u>
<u>2: Sunday</u>	<u>Noon – 5 PM</u>
<u>3: Monday</u>	<u>Noon – 8 PM</u>
<u>4: Tuesday</u>	<u>10 AM – 6 PM</u>
<u>5: Wednesday</u>	<u>Noon – 8 PM</u>
<u>6: Thursday</u>	<u>10 AM – 6 PM</u>
<u>7: Friday</u>	<u>10 AM – 6 PM</u>
<u>8: Saturday</u>	<u>9 AM – 2 PM</u>
<u>9: Sunday</u>	<u>9 AM – 2 PM</u>

New Voting Machines on the Way

In January of 2021 we placed an order to replace our 26 Dominion BMD (Ballot Marking Device) voting machines with the new Dominion ICE (ImageCast Evolution) voting machines. Due to a production delay, we are not able to acquire the new machines in time for a full rollout at the primary, but it is possible we may use some for Early Voting. These machines are designed to be faster and easier to operate. Expect to be trained on these new machines at your annual inspector training this summer! ■



The ICE Voting Machine by Dominion

Checking In with Electronic Poll Books

When checking in a voter, remember these search tips for efficient processing:

- Start by typing in only the **first 3 letters** of the voter's last name and first name to reduce errant typos. You can add a **year of birth** to further refine your search.
- **Check the spelling**, did you enter the letters in the correct order?
- **Check the fields**, did you enter the first name into the last name field?
- If voter's name does not show up in the search results, try the "**Search Entire County**" button at the bottom of the page to expand the search
- Only select "No Voter Found" if you are certain you've done all you can to search

Always have the voter tell you their address: Say "what is your address?" rather than "Do you live at 123 Main St?" Please pay close attention to make sure you have the correct person. We have had situations where someone was checked in as someone else (e.g. a relative or someone with a similar name), which leads to problems when that actual person comes in to vote.



The AskED Electronic Poll Book by Robis Elections, Inc.

2021 Primary Races

June 22, 2021

Republican Primaries Only

Barton: Justice, Councilman

Berkshire: Councilman,
Superintendent of Highways

Newark Valley: Councilman,
Superintendent of Highways

Owego: Superintendent of
Highways

The towns of Candor, Nichols, Richford, Spencer, and Tioga have no contested primary races. Inspectors from these towns that are willing to travel/work in another town need to notify one of the commissioners.

When and How to Issue an Affidavit Ballot

When?

- Voter is listed as Inactive, or has moved to a different election district from their previous residence and has not updated their info with the Board of Elections.
- Voter does not appear in the ePollbook and lives in an election district at your poll site.
- Primary Only: Voter is registered in a different party from the one holding the primary

How?

- First, read and follow the instructions on the ePollbook. *Always* make sure the voter reads the Notice to Voter form. Voter is issued a ballot voucher that says "Affidavit".
- Hand voter a blank Affidavit Envelope, and instruct them to fill it out completely. Send voter to the appropriate district/ballot table.
- Fill in the Challenge Report with the voter's complete name and address.
- Inspector at ballot table verifies Affidavit voucher and issues voter an Affidavit ballot for the district printed on the voucher.
- When the voter gives the envelope back, make sure it is completely filled out, signed, and sealed, and that it contains their ballot.
- The Inspector must fill in the Town and E.D. at the bottom of the envelope.
- Place the voter's completed Affidavit into the white envelope labeled "AFFIDAVIT."

Offices up for Election on November 2, 2021

Countywide

- ◆ Justice of Supreme Court 6th JD (x2), District Attorney, County Treasurer, and Coroner

County Legislative Offices

- ◆ All County Legislators

Town Offices

- ◆ **Barton**—Supervisor, Justice, and Councilman (x2)
- ◆ **Berkshire**—Supervisor, Town Clerk, Councilman, and Highway Superintendent
- ◆ **Candor**—Supervisor, Town Clerk, Councilman (x2), and Highway Superintendent
- ◆ **Newark Valley**—Supervisor, Justice, Councilman (x2), and Highway Superintendent
- ◆ **Nichols**—Supervisor, Town Clerk (unexpired term), and Councilman (x2)
- ◆ **Owego**—Supervisor, Town Clerk, Councilman (x2), and Highway Superintendent
- ◆ **Richford**—Supervisor, Councilman (x2), and Highway Superintendent
- ◆ **Spencer**—Supervisor, Town Clerk, Councilman (x2), and Highway Superintendent
- ◆ **Tioga**—Supervisor, Town Clerk, Councilman (x2), and Highway Superintendent

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