



Union Township ballots recounted following poll worker errors



Lisa Yanick-Jonaitis -- The Morning Sun Carol Rard, chairperson of the Isabella County Board of Canvassers, listens as the election night ballot handling process for Union Township is questions during a review on Wednesday, Nov. 5, 2014.

By [Randi Shaffer](#), *The Morning Sun*

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9 COMMENTS

A delay in Union Township election results was caused by several ballot handling errors Tuesday night.

The Isabella County Board of Canvassers met Wednesday afternoon to quiz three poll workers, the township clerk, township deputy clerk, county clerk and attorneys acting on behalf of both the Democratic and Republican parties, on what exactly went wrong during Tuesday’s election.

“The board does not take this lightly,” said Carol Rard, chair of the Isabella County Board of Canvassers. “It’s the sanctity of the vote. That is the one thing that keeps our democracy for the people.”

The board found three issues with Union Township ballots.

Several township ballots were taken from township precincts to the county building without the use of a mandatory locked transfer case, a ballot was counted twice in Precinct 2 and a count on absentee ballots was off by seven ballots.

Ballots from Precinct 2 were retabulated after a poll worker admitted that a ballot was damaged during processing, re-sent through the counting machine and counted twice.

While all voting discrepancies are required to be reported by poll workers, the poll worker in question, Dale Moore, said he did not feel as though the error warranted documentation.

“That should have been noted in the comment section,” Rard said. “Had it been, we would have read it as a group. We would have looked back and it would have made sense to us, and we would have understood what happened.”

The board was also concerned about a seven-vote miscount in absentee ballots.

That was resolved when township representatives stated the count that was turned into the county did not include seven absentee ballots that were turned in throughout Election Day.

Finally, Rard said, the board was concerned that several absentee ballots were taken from the precincts into the county office without the use of a required locked transport box.

The ballots were immediately placed in a county building vault and a security officer was hired to stand guard overnight, and Union Township officials were asked by the board to foot the bill for the security officer.

Township clerk Margie Henry, a Republican, said both she and deputy clerk Peter Galliant, a Democrat, accompanied the ballots from the precincts to the county buildings.

“I think they were looking at expediency — I’m only guessing,” Rard said.

Rard said all involved parties concerned, including the attorneys from each party, state representatives, township clerks, county clerk and county canvassing board, were asked about their feelings regarding the validity of the election.

“They all felt ... that the questions were resolved,” Rard said. “Everyone seemed to agree that those questions were answered.”

Rard said that election results will be certified when the board reconvenes 10 a.m. Thursday in the county commission chambers.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Randi Shaffer has been the Isabella County reporter for the Morning Sun since 2012. An alumna of CMU, she is in the process of obtaining her MSA degree. Obsessions include hockey, yoga and vegetables. Reach the author at rshaffer@michigannewspapers.com .

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