



DICKINSON COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

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Photo by Kathy Hageman/Dickinson County Public Information Coordinator

Dickinson County Clerk Barb Jones, second from left, explains to Herington City Commission candidate Eric Gares, seated to Jones' right, the process that needs to be followed if he requests a recount of the Herington City Commission race. Following the canvass of the Nov. 2 General Election Friday morning, Dickinson County Commissioners determined that the race between Herington city candidates Gares and Steve Lewis ended up tied at 136 votes apiece. From left are Dickinson County Clerk-Elect Jeanne Livingston, Jones and Gares, and Dickinson County Counselor Doug Thompson.

Herington city race results in tie

*By Kathy Hageman/
Dickinson County Public Information Coordinator*

A race between two Herington City Commission candidates will be determined during the Thursday, Nov. 18 Dickinson County Commission meeting, possibly by a coin toss, pulling a name out of a hat or some other manner.

County Commissioners, serving as the board of canvassers, met at 9 a.m. Friday morning to count provisional ballots which legally could be counted and certified the results of the Nov. 2 General Election.

When all qualifying provisional ballots were tallied, the race between newcomer Eric Gares and incumbent Steve Lewis — both vying for a spot on the Herington City Commission — resulted in a tie with both candidates receiving 136 votes.

Two positions are open on the Herington commission with incumbent Robbin Bell receiving the most votes at 155, while Gares and Lewis tied.

After reviewing statutes on how to handle ties and putting in a phone call to the Kansas Secretary of State's office, County Clerk Barb Jones and County Counselor Doug Thompson determined that county commissioners can break the tie at a later time, but the

candidates needed to be notified so they could decide whether or not to request a recount before the tie breaker meeting.

According to state statute, any candidate requesting a recount had until 5 p.m. Saturday (Nov. 13) to make a decision and notify county clerk Jones.

Lewis, who was contacted by phone during Friday's meeting, said he would not ask for a recount, but Gares said he would need some time to think about it. Gares notified Jones early Saturday afternoon that he would not request a recount, Jones said in an email.

That means county commissioners will determine the outcome of that race.

One vote difference

In the race for Abilene USD 435 District 1, Position 4 challenger Megan Armstrong won a seat on the school board. Armstrong prevailed by one vote, receiving 544 votes compared to the 543 votes tallied for incumbent Kyle Becker.

Neither Armstrong or Becker requested a recount, Jones said.

As for the other races in the county, results remained the same as reported on election night although the totals may have changed by a couple votes.

17 provisional ballots valid

A total of 33 provisional ballots were cast in Dickinson County, but of those, only 17 were eligible to be accepted and counted.

A provisional ballot is used to record a vote when there are questions about the voter's eligibility before the vote can be counted. In most of the cases, the rejected votes were cast by people who were not registered in Dickinson County or registered at all, Jones said.

Frustrating morning

Nothing much was working right Friday morning as Dickinson County Commissioners gathered at the Health Department to canvass the Nov. 2 General Election.

First off, Commission Chairman Lynn Peterson — who rarely misses a meeting — was absent due to illness. Commissioner Craig Chamberlin stepped in to serve as chairman and announced that County Administrator Brad Homman would serve as the third member of the board of canvassers, joining Chamberlin and Commissioner Ron Roller.

Second, the canvass was set to be streamed online using the county's GoToWebinar website —just like every commission meeting. While the technology seemed to be working correctly inside the health department meeting room, those attending the canvass soon learned that was not the case.

Dickinson County Clerk-Elect Jeanne Livingston received a text message from one of the candidates stating the candidate was unable to watch the proceedings online and it became apparent it was not being broadcast.

The canvass was paused as the computer was restarted and reset several times. Like before, everything seemed to be in working order in the meeting room, but potential viewers trying to watch online were unable to do so.

However, the meeting room location was open so interested viewers could have attended in person.

Despite illness, technology issues, procedural questions about how to break a tie and other concerns, the canvass was completed and certified after nearly three hours.