



Dane County Recount and Audit Analysis of Spring April 2, 2024 Election

District 36 Dane County Supervisor

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DANE COUNTY

In 2017, the Dane County Clerk, Scott McDonell stated that “election systems need constant vigilance along with multiple layers of defense and detection” to ensure safe and secure elections. Since then, the Clerk’s office has taken proactive measures to ensure that elections continue to be accurate, transparent, and focused on building voter and the public’s trust.

As the office was preparing to conduct an audit of the April 2, 2024 Spring Election and Presidential Preference, WEC contacted us to confirm that there would be a Recount for the District 36 Dane County Supervisor contest. Shortly thereafter, we received a Verified Petition for Recount to the Board of Canvassers (BOC) from candidate Loreen Gage.

County Clerk McDonell set the date for the Recount. It was scheduled for Friday, April 12, 2024 in Conference Room 354 in the City County Building at 9:15 am. Since we would be gathering ample data, we would also be using this information, for an audit analysis as well.

While in preparation for the audit, we had already contacted individuals who were Chief Inspectors and Election workers to gauge interest in working. However, now since we would be conducting a recount, we reached out again to see who would be available for an earlier set date (for an official recount). We confirmed five individuals, from the City of Madison, who were available and ready to work.

The County Clerk contacted the Board of Canvass members and Deputy Clerk Anderson contacted the following affected municipal clerks to inform them of the Recount:

- Township of Blooming Grove
- Township of Cottage Grove
- Village of Cottage Grove
- Township of Sun Prairie
- City of Madison

Although the official start time was 9:15 am, the conference room was scheduled to open earlier at 8:30 am to allow ample time for the clerks to receive and look over their paperwork and for any candidates, observers, or visitors to park, locate the room and get settled before the official scheduled time began. Clerks were also given the courtesy to drop off sealed and secure items to County Clerk staff at the front door of the CCB so they could go and park in the Dane County garage a couple of blocks away. All materials were held securely and unopened with County Clerk staff until the clerks or representatives returned. The chain of custody for all of the ballots and accompanying materials remained intact because all municipalities were responsible for transporting their secured ballots to and from the City-County Building.

The clerks were asked to bring in an election official (preferably a Chief Inspector) and the following items:

- All ballots to be recounted, including any provisional ballots processed after Election Day
- The original inspector statement
- The original results tapes

- Write-in tally sheet for the registered write-in candidate
- Your copy of the original poll list (we have your 2nd book) including any supplemental voter lists
- Badger Books: we will have your electronic files available on one of the County's laptops
- The absentee ballot log
- Any rejected absentee ballots
- All used absentee ballot certificate envelopes
- The Municipal Board Of Canvassers Record of Activity created during the processing of provisional ballots, if any
- Any provisional ballot documentation, if any

Deputy Clerk Anderson contacted Dane County Facilities Management to request long tables to be brought into Conference Room 354 on April 11, 2024 for set up. County Clerk McDonell, Deputy Clerk Anderson and Auditor Beauregard set up the room and planned for 3 long tables to run simultaneously. The longer tables would allow for plenty of space for organizing and counting. We also were mindful that candidates, audit staff, observers and visitors would need to move around the tables to observe while the Recount was in motion. During set-up, the County Clerk contacted the County's technology team, who stopped by to ensure that we could hold the meeting over Zoom for individuals who were interested but were not able to be physically present.

April 12, 2024

The County Clerk's staff opened Room 354 at 8:30 am. This meeting was open to the candidates, observers, the public and the media. Taking precedence over a standard audit, this Recount provided ample data to support our audit procedures. Instead of the standard assessing of two reporting locations, one in Madison and another in Greater Dane County, the office would now apply recount and audit processes for the following five areas, delivering a more robust look at the data.

- Township of Blooming Grove: Reporting Units (RU): 1-7
- Township of Cottage Grove RU: 1-6
- Village of Cottage Grove RU: 1-3, 5, 7
- Village of Cottage Grove RU: 4, 6, 8-9
- Township of Sun Prairie RU: 1-3
- City of Madison RU: 1, 155

8:30 -9:00 am:

Dane County Clerk Staff (Dane County Clerk, Scott McDonell; Dane County Deputy Clerk, Patti Anderson, Dane County Elections Specialist, Rachel Rodriguez and the Dane County Audit Team) welcomed the Board of Canvassers, the municipal representatives from all areas containing the District 36 Supervisor contest, candidate Loreen Gage and some observers (Jan Sternbach, Yogesh Chawla, Susan Fox).

As the individuals began to enter the room, the Dane County staff ushered them to a table if they were coming from a municipality or to our sign-in area if they were candidates, observers,

media, or visitors. We seated the Board of Canvassers in the front to review absentee envelopes and to deal with any ballot questions or challenges. Since we were starting with the two largest wards and the smallest one first, we seated Cottage Grove, Sun Prairie, and Blooming Grove at tables. As the representatives from the City of Madison arrived, we seated them in some overflow seating so that they could observe until it was time for them to count.

9:00 – 9:15 am:

Candidate David Peterson and several observers (Chris Ston, Mary Meyers, Dawn Peterson, Melissa Ratcliff) arrived.

9:15 am:

County Clerk McDonnell promptly calls the meeting to order. He gave an overview of the rules, procedures and provided instructions for the observers.

9:30 am:

Recount/Audit began.

We began with 3 municipalities, running simultaneously. Each one was provided with a packet that included an Unofficial Results Report of the District 36 County Supervisor contest for their area, a recount checklist, a MINUTES sheet for reporting any changes, challenges, problems, discrepancies, errors or observer objections. We also asked them to record any decisions made by the Board of Canvassers and we provided a tallying sheet for organizing and counting.

- Table One included the Town of Blooming Grove (BG) Municipal Clerk, Mike Wolf, one BG representative and one member from our audit team, Baxter Exum.
- Table Two included the Town Municipal Clerk, Kim Banigan from Cottage Grove and the Village Municipal Clerk, Lisa Kalata, also from Cottage Grove, and one member of our Audit Team, Pat McCutcheon. (There were three reporting units for Cottage Grove: 1 for the Township and 2 for the Village)
- Table Three included the Town of Sun Prairie Municipal Clerk, Rhonda Wiedenbeck and Town Treasurer Kay Weisensel and two members of the Audit Team, Tom and Sandy Poppe. When Sun Prairie concluded, the City of Madison began their procedures (at Table Three).

9:40 am:

Town of Cottage Grove's Absentee (ABS) Envelopes taken to the Board of Canvass (BOC) for Review.

9:45-11:55 am:

Recount/Audit Procedures taking place at all 3 tables (for all reporting units):

Table 1: Town of Blooming Grove (1-7)

Table 2: Town of Cottage Grove (1-6)

Table 3: Town of Sun Prairie (1-3)

As each bag was presented for recount, clerks and at least one other table member confirmed that the bags were sealed and that they matched the information on the Inspector's Statement. Once confirmed, the bags were opened and organized.

At each table, the municipal representatives were asked to:

- Separate absentee envelopes, any rejected or remade ballots (absentees or Election Day). These materials were swiftly taken to the BOC for review. Any changes that were made would be recorded by the clerk on the minutes sheet.
- Distribute ballots among the table members.
 - Larger municipalities designated some who worked on absentee ballots while others worked on Election Day ballots.
- Sort the ballots (Ballots are to be handled slowly so that all observers can visually review offices and candidate names; any requested or questionable ballots can be set aside)
 - If ballot questions cannot be answered by Audit Team, ballot(s) in question are taken to BOC for a determination.
 - If changes are determined, the municipal representative is asked to record this information on the minutes sheet.
 - Initial sort into 2 piles (All County Supervisor, District 36 ballots AND all other ballots)
 - Next, slowly sort for the candidates
 - 2 Piles for the 2 main candidates (Gage and Peterson) for County Supervisor, District 36
 - 1 pile for the one registered write-in candidate (McKinney)
 - 1 pile for all other ballots (and set aside).
 - Count and Cross-stack ballots in piles of 20s (in the stacks for Gage, Peterson and McKinney).
 - Record the number of the three main stacks (Gage, Peterson and McKinney).
 - Each person will record their counts (on post-its) so that they will be ready when the table engages in a full count for each candidate.
 - Total, reconcile and confirm vote totals to Election Day results tape totals.
 - Redistribute ballots and recount if numbers do NOT match.
- Check for provisional ballots
 - Were any returned from the Municipal Board of Canvass?
 - Yes, review ballots for Candidates and Inspector's Statement and notes from local BOC. Take for confirmation from Recount BOC.
 - No, proceed.

Recount/Audit Process (continued...)

- Make sure to add or subtract numbers if any changes were determined by BOC.
- Report final count numbers on the MINUTES sheet.
- Secure ballots and make sure the BOC signs off on new Recount Bags.
- Finalize minutes documents, especially attending to any BOC changes and the reasons for the change.

10:00 am: BOC Determination for the Town of Cottage Grove:

- No adjustments or changes.

10:04 am: Town of Blooming Grove's twelve Absentee Envelopes were taken to the BOC for review.

10:12 am: BOC Determination for the Town of Blooming Grove:

- No adjustments or changes.

10:14 am: Town of Sun Prairie's Absentee Envelopes were taken to the BOC for review

10:22 am: Town of Blooming Grove officials completed their recount.

- Ballot Bags 00142729 and 50011291 were open and tallied. Ballots were organized and sorted for the District 36 County Supervisor contest. There were a total of 97 ballots for this category.
- There were 41 ballots cast for Gage and 35 cast for Peterson. There were 0 ballots cast for the Registered Write-in, Mckinney and zero provisionals. There were also 21 under-votes, according to the unofficial results report. There were no changes in results from Election Day.
- Ballots were sealed in new ballot bag 00000885.
- New (sealed) Ballot Bags taken to BOC for signatures.

Municipality:

Town of Blooming Grove

Municipal Clerk: Mike Wolf

Reporting Unit: 1-7

County Supervisor, District 36

	Candidate	Election Day Result (Dane County's Unofficial Results Report) (4/2)	Recount/ Audit Data (Manual Hand- Count Result) (4/12)	Change/ Comments
	Gage	41	41	0
	Peterson	35	35	0
	McKinney	0	0	0
	Others (Write-Ins)	0	0	0
TOTALS		76	76	0
Over-Votes		0	0	0
Under-Votes		21	21	0
GRAND TOTALS		97	97	0

MINUTES Sheet Summary: NO CHANGE.

Results Tape, Voters from Poll List and Recount (hand-count) match:
97 total voters.

There were 97 total ballots cast for the contested race. Gage received 41 votes and Peterson received 35. There were 21 undervotes reported on the Results Tape from Election Day and the Unofficial Results Report provided by the County.

10:25 am: Brandon Selfrood from the station, WKOW arrived and signed in to observe and report.

10:35 am: BOC determinations for the Town of Sun Prairie:

- No ABS envelope changes.
- Two remade ballots with missing initials would be counted.
- One ABS ballot with a missing signature would have to be drawn down. A blank ballot was used for the draw-down. The result reduced the total number of undervotes by one (from 88-87) and the overall number of total ballots for this contest decreased from 389 to 388.

10:42 am: Town of Cottage Grove (1-3,5,7) completes recount.

- Ballot Bags 00195041, 00195018, 00195017, 00195016, 00195015, and 00195014 were open and tallied. Ballots were organized and sorted for the District 36 County Supervisor contest. The total number of ballots for the contested race was 790 ballots.
- There were 367 ballots cast for Gage and 404 cast for Peterson. There were 19 ballots cast for the Registered Write-in, McKinney and zero for provisionals. Clerk Banigan noted that there were 3 more votes included for McKinney than were originally tallied, bringing his total up to 19---which matches the total number of write-ins from the unofficial results report from Election Day). There were also 180 under-votes, according to that report and the results tape from Election Day.
- Ballots were sealed in new ballot bags 008251 and 008254, and the absentee ballots were secured in bag 008250.
- New sealed Ballot Bags taken to BOC for signatures.

Municipality:
Town of Cottage Grove
Municipal Clerk: Kim Banigan
Reporting Unit: 1-6
County Supervisor, District 36

	Candidate	Election Day Results (Dane County's Unofficial Results Report or Inspector Statement) (4/2)	Recount/ Audit Data (Manual Hand-Count Result) (4/12)	Change/ Comments
	Gage	367	367	0
	Peterson	404	404	0
	McKinney	*	19	+3
	(Others) Write-Ins	19	0	0
	TOTALS	790	790	0
	Over-Votes	0	0	0
	Under-Votes	180	180	0
	GRAND TOTAL	970	970	0

MINUTES Sheet Summary:

No change in results for candidates Gage and Peterson.

*Cottage Grove Town Clerk Banigan reported that McKinney's (original –Election Day) tally increased by 3 for a total of 19 (which matches the Election Day tape and the Unofficial Results report for write-ins from Dane County).

There was a total of 970 ballots cast. Gage received 367 votes and Peterson received 404. McKinney received 19 as the Registered Write-In.

10:52 am: Village of Cottage Grove, Reporting Units (1-3; 5;7) starts recount (at Table 2).

10:55 am: Village of Cottage Grove's (1-3; 5; 7) ABS Envelopes taken to the BOC.

10:57 am: Town of Sun Prairie officials completed their recount (at Table 3).

- Ballot Bag 1291936 was opened and tallied. Ballots were organized and sorted for the District 36 County Supervisor contest. The total number of ballots for the contested race was 389 ballots.
- There were 132 ballots cast for Gage and 160 cast for Peterson. There were 8 ballots cast for the Registered Write-in, McKinney and zero for provisionals.
- Clerk Wiedenbeck noted that there were missing clerk initials on 2 remade ballots. They were counted per the BOC (not punishing voters for (Election Official) EO errors).
- BOC decided to drawdown one ballot because of a missing signature on an absentee ballot. They used a blank ballot for the drawdown, resulting in one less undervote in the race.
- After the BOC's ruling, ballots were sealed in new ballot bags 008252 and the draw-down ballot was sealed in 008253.
- New (sealed) Ballot Bags taken to BOC for signatures.

Municipality:

Township of Sun Prairie

Municipal Clerk: Rhonda Wiedenbeck

Reporting Unit: 1-3

County Supervisor, District 36

	Candidate	Election Day Results (Dane County's Unofficial Results Report) (4/2)	Recount/ Audit Data (Manual Hand- Count Result) (4/12)	Change/ Comments
	Gage	132	132	0
	Peterson	160	160	0
	McKinney	8	8	0
	Others (Write-Ins)	0	0	0
TOTALS		300	300	0
Over-Votes		1	1	0
Under-Votes		88	87	Drawdown by BOC*
GRAND TOTALS		389	388	Final Result changed because of drawdown.

MINUTES Sheet Summary:

No change in results for candidates Gage and Peterson.

Two remade ballots with missing "EO" initials were counted (per the BOC).

One draw-down performed by the BOC, resulting in one less count for the undervotes (88 to 87).

Final contest total decreases by one (389 to 388). Clerk Wiedenbeck also noted that the Final total number of ballots cast decreased by one (509 to 508).

11:02 am: BOC determinations for the Village of Cottage Grove (1-3, 5, 7) :

- BOC voted 2-1, in favor of counting an absentee envelope with missing initials.
- Five ballots were discovered with missing EO initials and BOC decided to count them (voters are not punished for EO errors)
- One remade ballot was found with missing initials and the BOC also decided to count it (once again, the voter is not punished for EO error).

11:19 am: The City of Madison (CM) officials begin their recount at Table 3. CM has two reporting units eligible for recount (Ward 1 and 155). Ward 155 has zero voters, hence no other supplementary information.

11:23 am: The City of Madison's ABS Envelopes were taken to the BOC for review.

11:27 am: Village of Cottage Grove (1-3, 5, 7) completes their recount.

- Ballot Bag 5594087 and 55940828 was opened and tallied. Ballots were organized and sorted for the District 36 County Supervisor contest. The total number of ballots for the contested race was 898 ballots.
- There were 378 ballots cast for Gage and 385 cast for Peterson. Clerk Kalata reported that the tally for McKinney went up 4 votes from what was reported on Election night, for a total of 15.
- Ballots were sealed in new ballot bags 008247 and 008248.
- New (sealed) Ballot Bags taken to BOC for signatures.

Municipality:

Village of Cottage Grove

Municipal Clerk: Lisa Kalata

Reporting Unit: 1-3, 5, 7

County Supervisor, District 36

	Candidate	Election Day Results (Dane County's Unofficial Results Report) (4/2)	Recount/ Audit Data (Manual Hand- Count Result) (4/12)	Change/ Comments
	Gage	378	378	0
	Peterson	385	385	0
	McKinney	11*	15	
	Others (Write-Ins)	10	6	0
	TOTALS	784	784	0
	Over-Votes	0	0	0
	Under-Votes	114	114	0
	GRAND TOTALS	898	898	0

MINUTES Sheet Summary:

No change in results for candidates Gage and Peterson.

*Clerk Kalata wrote that McKinney's original tally of 11 from Election Day increased (by four) to 15 during the recount.

BOC voted on 6 ballots, set aside because of missing Election Official (EO) initials.

All ballots were decided to be included in the count (per the BOC).

11:41 am: BOC Determination for the City of Madison (ABS Envelopes):

- No changes.

11:46 am: Village of Cottage Grove's (4, 6, 8, 9) starts their recount and ABS envelopes taken for BOC review.

11:52 am: Ballot taken from Madison Chief Inspector Koffel to the BOC for review from the City of Madison.

11:57 am: BOC voted 2-1 to accept on a questionable "overvote" from Election Day as an overvote for the City of Madison.

12:08 pm: BOC Determination for the Village of Cottage Grove (4,6, 8, 9):

- BOC voted 2-1 to count a ballot that was missing the (clerk's) witness signature for an In-Person Absentee ballot (IPAV-Early Voting/In Person Ballot).
- Remade ballot missing EO initials counts (per BOC).
- No changes for standard ABS envelopes.

12:12 pm: Another ballot was taken by Chief Inspector Koffel, to the BOC from the City of Madison with a partially filled oval for Peterson and a Write-In.

12:15 pm: BOC voted unanimously (3-0) that a partially marked oval for Peterson and a write-in should be counted as an overvote and not as a vote for Peterson, which they determined was done on Election Day. This ruling changed the final results for the contested race, resulting in one vote less for Peterson and an additional over-vote.

12:17 pm: Village of Cottage Grove (4, 6, 8, 9) completes their recount.

- Ballot Bag 55865447 was opened and tallied. Ballots were organized and sorted for the District 36 County Supervisor contest. The total number of ballots for the contested race was 587 ballots.
- There were 295 ballots cast for Gage and 274 cast for Peterson. Clerk Kalata reported that the tally for McKinney went up 4 votes from what was reported on Election night, for a total of 18 (which matches the write-in totals from the Dane County's Unofficial Results Report from Election Day).
- Ballots were sealed in new ballot bags 008249 and 008256.
- New (sealed) Ballot Bags taken to BOC for signatures.

Municipality:
Village of Cottage Grove
Municipal Clerk: Lisa Kalata
Reporting Unit: 4, 6, 8-9
County Supervisor, District 36

	Candidate	Election Day Results (Unofficial Results Report) (4/2)	Recount/ Audit Data (Manual Hand- Count Result) (4/12)	Change/ Comments
	Gage	295	295	0
	Peterson	274	274	0
	McKinney	*	18	
	Others (Write-Ins)	18	0	0
	TOTALS	587		0
	Over-Votes	0	0	0
	Under-Votes	128	128	0
	GRAND TOTALS	715	715	0

Minutes Sheet Summary:

BOC voted on an Absentee (ABS) envelope due to EO error (missing initials).

Result: vote counted.

*Cottage Grove Clerk Kalata reported that the write-in vote increased by four (14 to 18) from the Inspector’s Statement on Election Day. Eighteen is also the total number of write-ins from Dane County’s Unofficial Results Report (from Election Day).

No change in the outcome of the contested race.

12:28: City of Madison (1) completes their recount.

- Ballot Bag 00186774 was opened and tallied. Ballots were organized and sorted for the District 36 County Supervisor contest. The total number of ballots for the contested race was 381 ballots.
- There were 209 ballots cast for Gage and 169 cast for Peterson. Chief Inspector Kofel reported that the tally for Peterson decreased by 1 vote and the overvotes increased by one, based on a unanimous (3-0) vote by the BOC. The voter had partially filled an oval for Peterson and also, wrote in a candidate name. The BOC ruled that this vote should have been counted for that name, and hence, an overvote (since the name was not for a registered write-in) and not a vote for Peterson (which is how the machine would have read this vote on election day).

(Note original tally for Peterson was 170 and the final total will now be 169).

- Ballots were sealed in new ballot bag 008258.
- New (sealed) Ballot Bag taken to BOC for signatures.

Municipality:

City of Madison

Municipal Clerk: Maribeth Witzel-Behl

Reporting Unit: 1

County Supervisor, District 36

	Candidate	Election Day Results (Dane County's Unofficial Results Report) (4/2)	Recount/ Audit Data (Manual Hand- Count Result) (4/12)	Change/ Comments
	Gage	209	209	0
	Peterson	170	169	-1
	McKinney	0	0	0
	Others (Write- Ins)	2	3	+1
TOTALS		381	381	0
Over-Votes		1	1	0
Under-Votes		75	75	0
GRAND TOTALS		457	457	Net Change: (-1+1=0) 0

Minutes Sheet Summary:

BOC voted 3-0 that a ballot with an oval filled for Peterson AND a “write-in” name should have been counted for that write-in (un-registered write-in and hence, an overvote) and not a vote for Peterson. A voter’s write-in takes precedence over a partially filled oval. Peterson’s vote total decreased by 1.

BOC voted 2-1 that an overvote (tabulated as an Election Day overvote) is indeed an overvote.

12:43 pm: County Clerk McDonnell convenes the Recounts. The new totals are confirmed

Recount is convened and the new totals for the contested race are confirmed. Gage received a total of 1422 votes and Peterson received a total of 1427 (one less than what occurred on Election Day). This change was due to a ballot with an oval filled for Peterson where the “write-in” name should have been counted as noted on the MINUTES summary sheet, which was corrected by the Board of Canvas during the recount. Overall, there was no change in the District 36 Supervisor Race. Candidate Peterson is the new Dane County Supervisor for District 36.

For audit purposes, we reviewed five reporting units in Greater Dane County and one for the City of Madison. Overall, the audit went well and our voting processes are valid, secure and supported by our paper ballots. We found no significant changes from Election Day.

Final Results: Recount/Audit- April 12, 2024

Dane County Supervisor: District 36

	Gage	Peterson	Changes
Town of Blooming Grove	41	35	
Town of Cottage Grove	367	404	
Town of Sun Prairie	132	160	
Village of Cottage Grove (1-3; 5; 7)	378	385	
Village of Cottage Grove (4, 6, 8-9)	295	274	
City of Madison (1, 155)	209	169	One less vote from Election Day for Peterson- Voter partially marked bubble and wrote in a candidate name. (Write-ins take precedence over marked bubbles)
TOTAL	1422	1427	