

Jefferson County finishes presidential ballot recount

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JEFFERSON — A hand recount of ballots cast in the Nov. 8 presidential election yielded little change in Jefferson County vote tallies.

“We believe that the overall results show that the machines are very accurate and the process works,” Jefferson County Clerk Barb Frank said on Wednesday as tabulators completed the presidential vote recount requested by Green Party candidate Jill Stein two days earlier than expected.

Republican President-Elect Donald Trump bested Democrat Hillary Clinton by approximately 22,000 votes in Wisconsin, but Stein had alleged — without evidence — that the results might have been hacked in a cyberattack. However, Dane County Circuit Court Judge Valerie Bailey-Rihn concluded that Stein’s attorneys failed to show any hard evidence the machines were attacked and are unreliable.

The Wisconsin Election Commission had to grant Stein’s request for a recount under state law, but refused another Stein request that the commission order all county clerks to recount the votes by hand, leaving it up to individual counties to decide how to conduct the process.

Frank had planned a hand count anyway because the machines already had been utilized.

Following the recount, tallies show that Jefferson County, electors gave President-elect Trump and Vice President-elect Mike Pence 23,410 ballots. Democrat Hillary Clinton and running mate Virginia U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine received 16,561.

The county vote counts for others vying for the top administrative post on Election Day were: Constitution Party candidate Darrell L. Castle and running mate Scott N. Bradley, 179 votes; Libertarian Party candidate Gary Johnson and Bill Weld, 1,660; Wisconsin Green Party candidate Jill Stein and Ajamu Baraka, 462; Workers World Party candidate Monica Moorehead and Lamont Lily, 29, and American Delta Party candidate Rock Roque De La Fuente and Michael Steinberg, 26. There were 560 write-ins.

The majority of municipalities favored Trump. Clinton carried the cities of Fort Atkinson, Whitewater and Lake Mills and towns of Lake Mills and Oakland.

Across the county, the recount netted Clinton eight additional votes and Trump three more ballots. Castle and Stein each lost a vote and Johnson gained two. There was no change for Moorhead or De La Fuente.

Within the cities of Fort Atkinson and Jefferson; the villages of Cambridge, Johnson Creek, Lac La Belle, Palmyra and Sullivan, and the towns of Aztalan, Concord, Jefferson, Lake Mills, Milford and Sullivan, there was no change in vote totals as a result of the recount other than a few ballots for a registered write-in candidate.

The recount tally showed that Clinton lost one vote and Trump gained three in the City of Lake Mills. Clinton gained a vote in the Jefferson County portion of the City of Whitewater.

In the City of Waterloo, the results from election night showed a 69-vote difference, with the president-elect earning the most ballots. The recount awarded two more votes to Trump and one more to Clinton.

Within the City of Watertown, where the recount started within Jefferson County, seven votes were added to Clinton's total and four to Trump's. In addition, Castle lost one vote and Johnson gained one vote.

The recount of the Town of Cold Spring ballots cost Trump one ballot. In the Town of Hebron, one more ballot went to Clinton.

The new tally in the Town of Farmington showed an additional vote for Trump.

Castle and Clinton each lost single votes in the Town of Koshkonong.

Town of Ixonia ballots showed an additional vote cast for Johnson, while the Town of Watertown recount subtracted one from Clinton's tally.

Recounted ballots in the Town of Oakland cost single votes for Trump, Clinton and Stein.

The president-elect also gained a vote in the Town of Waterloo. Clinton picked up two additional votes and Castle also gained one.

Frank noted that overall, the recount went very well.

She originally anticipated needing to go into Friday to complete the task. However, it was done on Wednesday.

"I'm happy it went as quickly as it did and that we did not have long hours," Frank said. "Once we got into the process, it kind of flowed. It was plenty long."

She credited the municipal clerks, the poll workers, chief election inspectors and volunteers for moving the process along.

The recount is more than 70-percent complete across Wisconsin, and Clinton has gained just 82 votes on Trump, who won the state by more than 22,000 votes. The Wisconsin Elections Commission reported Wednesday that 34 of 72 counties had completed their work and that the others are on track to finish by next week's deadline. More than 2.1 million votes out of the nearly 3 million cast have been recounted.

U.S. District Judge Paul Diamond in Philadelphia on Tuesday scheduled a hearing Friday on the request for a recount in Pennsylvania. The Republican Party and Trump warned that the case threatens Pennsylvania's ability to certify its election before the Dec. 13 federal deadline. Stein's team hasn't produced evidence of hacking, but calls Pennsylvania's election system "a national disgrace."

Michigan's recount of presidential votes ended after a judge lifted an order that forced a statewide review of millions of ballots.

That recount, also sought by Stein, lasted three days in more than 20 of Michigan's 83 counties. Some counties hadn't planned to start until later.

Federal Judge Mark Goldsmith said Wednesday that he must follow a decision by the Michigan appeals court, which found that Stein couldn't seek a recount.

he got 1 percent of the state vote and presented no evidence of fraud. Republican Donald Trump narrowly won.

The Michigan elections board stopped the recount because of Goldsmith's new ruling and planned to meet again today.