

**IT INVESTMENT CAPITAL FUND
PROJECT STATUS REPORT**

To: Information Technology Strategy and Investment Committee
John Vittner, Office of Policy & Management

FROM: Peggy Reeves

AGENCY/PROJECT NAME: SOTS / Improving Voter Service at Polling Places

PROJECT MANAGER: Peggy Reeves

REPORTING PERIOD: Project Inception through 06/30/2016

Total Funds Requested: \$ 4,550,000

Bond Commission Approval(s): Date: Sept. 2015 Amount: \$ 4,550,000

Accumulative Total Capital Fund Expenditures to Date: \$ 1,700,000(encumbered)

Brief Project Description/Summary: Electronic poll books provide the means for checking and managing voter registration records at the polling locations on Election Day. Currently the check-in system is completed manually with paper and pen and requires several poll workers to administer. Voters are divided into two or more lines based on their residential street name. At peak voting times, and during high turnout elections, this is an inefficient and sometimes confusing process that perpetuates long wait times, which, in turn will cause many to leave without voting. An unfortunate experience such as long wait times will also factor into the individual's likelihood of voting in the future. Electronic poll books will improve the speed of service to voters, without the need to separate voters in lines by street name because each poll worker involved in the check in process will have access to the entire voting list for the district. The poll books will also improve the speed and accuracy of post-election data reports such as turnout percentages and voter history. Currently that process is done manually and is quite laborious for the Registrars of Voters and poll workers.

The Help America Vote Act (HAVA), a federal law passed in 2002, requires that every voting location provide accessible voting machines to accommodate voters with disabilities, so that they may fully participate in the elections just as any other citizen would. Replacing the voting system for the disabled has been a long-held goal of the agency and the disability community. Currently there is a vote by phone system in place to serve those who cannot cast a paper ballot in the typical manner. Since it was adopted the current system both the local election officials and the voters the systems serves have been dissatisfied.

Summary of Progress Achieved to Date: The Office of the Secretary of the State has published Requirement Specifications for an electronic poll book system. Solutions have been submitted by third party vendors and are being evaluated against the requirements specified in that Document. The University of Connecticut Center for Voting Technology Research (VoTeR Center) is performing the evaluation of vendor solutions. Four evaluations have been completed and documented. There is one additional system that was submitted late and evaluation has begun and is ongoing. Most of the systems provided for evaluation showed merit but will need additional work before they could be

recommended for use in Connecticut. The University of Connecticut has released the evaluations to the vendors in the hopes that the systems' weaknesses can be addressed and resubmitted for evaluation.

The Office of the Secretary of the State went out to bid on a new accessible voting system to serve voters with disabilities, as required by federal law, the Help America Vote Act and The Americans with Disabilities Act. With the assistance of the Department of Administrative Services, we have awarded a contract for a ballot marking device that will provide accessibility to the voting process for individuals with disabilities to IVS, LLC of Louisville, Kentucky. The purchase order is in process; we have encumbered approximately 1.7 million dollars for the winning bid, but we have not yet expended it.

Issues and Risks: None at this time

Next Steps & Project Milestones: The immediate next steps are to complete the evaluation of the fifth electronic poll book system and work with those vendors whose systems were lacking in certain mandatory and/or preferred requirements but show promise. Although it is too late to recommend a system to be implemented in time for the November general election, we will continue to work with the Voter Center in order to have something in place for 2017.

The purchase order for the accessible voting system will be completed in the next few days and delivery of the units to all 169 towns is scheduled for October 2016.