



**KATRINA BARTOLOMIE**  
ASSESSOR  
COUNTY CLERK-RECORDER  
REGISTRAR OF VOTERS  
COMMISSIONER OF  
CIVIL MARRIAGES

**COUNTY OF MENDOCINO**

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June 4, 2021

Mendocino County Grand Jury  
Mr. Kevin T. Evans, Foreperson  
PO Box 939  
Ukiah, CA 95482

Dear Mr. Evans:

Please accept my responses to Mendocino County Civil Grand Jury 2020-2021 report titled "Was My Vote Counted? "All Mail-in Balloting" in Mendocino County's General Election.

I do not dis-agree with any of the Grand Jury's findings. I have prepared my responses to the recommendations that include my opinion and my findings related to specific instances.

I have also answered R3 - Mail Clerks who process mail from the USPS be administered the California Oath given duly sworn elections officials. I believe my office is responsible for administering an oath in regards to elections workers.

I have attached our Ballot Retrieval Procedures we put in place during the November 2020 election.

Please let me know, if you have any additional questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Katrina Bartolomie  
Assessor, County Clerk, Recorder, Registrar of Voters

**REQUIRED RESPONSE FORM**

**Grand Jury Report Title :** *Was My Vote Counted?  
"All Mail-in Balloting" in Mendocino County's General Election*

**Report Dated :** February 6, 2021 *(Received via email on 4/6/2021)*

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**Response Form Submitted By:**

Katrina Bartolomie  
Assessor, County Clerk, Recorder, Registrar of Voters  
501 Low Gap Road, Room 1020  
Ukiah, CA 95482

**Response MUST be submitted, per Penal Code §933.05, no later than: June 6, 2021** (within 60 days of receipt)

**I have reviewed the report and submit my responses to the FINDINGS portion of the report as follows:**

- I (we) agree with the Findings numbered:  
F1, F2, F3, F4, F5, F6, F7, F8
  
  - I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the Findings numbered below, and have *attached* a statement specifying any portion of the Finding that are disputed with an explanation of the reasons therefore.
- 

**I have reviewed the report and submit my responses to the RECOMMENDATIONS portion of the report as follows:**

- The following Recommendation(s) have been implemented and **attached, as required**, is a summary describing the implemented actions:  
R5
  
- The following Recommendation(s) have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future; **attached, as required**, is a time frame for implementation:  
R1, R3, R4, R6

- The following Recommendation(s) require further analysis, and **attached, as required**, is an explanation and the scope and parameters of the planned analysis, and a time frame for the matter to be prepared, discussed and approved by the officer and/or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed: (This time frame shall not exceed six (6) months from the date of publication of the Grand Jury Report)
- 

- The following Recommendations will NOT be implemented because they are not warranted and/or are not deemed reasonable; **attached, as required**, is an explanation therefore:
- 

*I have completed the above responses, and have attached, as required the following number of pages to this response form:*

Number of Pages attached: 9 including cover sheet

*I understand that responses to Grand Jury Reports are public records. They will be posted on the Grand Jury website: [www.mendocinocounty.org/government/grand-jury](http://www.mendocinocounty.org/government/grand-jury). The clerk of the responding agency is required to maintain a copy of the response.*

*I understand that I must submit this signed response form and any attachments as follows:*

First Step: E-mail in pdf file format to:

- The Grand Jury Foreperson at: [grandjury@mendocinocounty.org](mailto:grandjury@mendocinocounty.org)
- The Presiding Judge: [grandjury@mendocino.courts.ca.gov](mailto:grandjury@mendocino.courts.ca.gov)

Second Step: Mail all originals to:

Mendocino County Grand Jury  
P.O. Box 939  
Ukiah, CA 95482

Printed Name: Katrina Bartolomie

Title: Assessor Clerk Recorder

Signed: 

Date: June 4, 2021

Was My Vote Counted?  
"All Main-in Balloting" in Mendocino County's General Election

Recommendations:

**R1 The Election Office explore eligibility exceptions to participation in the Voter's Choice Act (VCA) pertinent to rural counties with resources and infrastructure limitations.**

Response: I agree with the premise of this recommendation. However, currently the State's requirements are more appropriate for populated urban counties, in relation to the number of days required to be open and the availability of high-speed internet to be connected to our Election Management System, that is used to verify whether the voter has returned a ballot or not so election workers can determine whether a ballot can be issued at the vote center. For the November 2020 General Election the State did relax the number of days required to be open from 10 days to 4 days. I hope in the future the State will permanently relax the number of days required to be open, if this done it may be a better option for us. I will continue to watch the reports for this, and hope one day to utilize the VCA concept throughout the County.

**R2 Mendocino County Elections have it's own United States Post Office Box for receipt of elections related materials to avoid delay caused by additional sorting in the Mail Room of the Administrative Office.**

Response: We will look into this with advice from Central Services. In the last few days prior to the November 2020 election, the local USPS did allow specific Elections personnel to come and pick up ballots at their facility.

**R3 Mail Clerks who process mail from the USPS be administered the California Oath given duly sworn elections officials.**

Response: It is my understanding that all employees that are hired to work for the County of Mendocino are administered an oath during their orientation, my department also administers the same basic oath with additional department requirements appointing them as a Deputy Clerk in Elections before they handle any ballot envelopes. Prior to the next election, I will coordinate with Central Services to arrange for mail personnel to be administered this Oath by my office.

**R4 For procedures regarding replacement ballots, the County Clerk's Office request a feature from the tabulation software vendor to record either the original ballot or its replacement to automatically inactivate the unused ballot which would eliminate manual intervention by elections staff to inactivate and reactivate ballots.**

Response: If a voter returns a suspended ballot (after telling us they did not receive their original (suspended) ballot), there needs to be research into if that suspended ballot can be counted. Manual verification of suspended ballots ensures that the voter casts a single ballot rather than allowing for possible multiple votes. It also allows for cross checking with other county data to ensure that the voter did not move and cast a ballot in another county. If we don't investigate each ballot there is a chance for someone to vote more than once. Checking suspended ballots can be time consuming, but we must be thorough and do everything in our power to not allow someone to vote twice.

**R5 Two sworn individuals count and log the number of ballots collected from drop-off boxes in double-custody. The dually signed count log be placed in the ballot transportation box and transported to the Elections Office.**

Response: The November 2020 Election was the first time Mendocino County had ballot drop boxes. Our drop boxes were located at the City of Willits, City of Fort Bragg, and the City of Point Arena. We also had a drop off box at the Boonville Fairgrounds office. We chose City locations because City Clerks / City Managers are considered election officials who can legally handle election mail/ballots. Our procedure is as follows: 2 people (City Clerk or City Manager and one other employee) would empty their ballot box throughout the day; count the ballots in the drop box, log the

number of ballots, and sign the log sheet. The ballots were transferred to a smaller transport box, stored in a secure location within their department waiting to be transported to Ukiah. Every other day an elections employee would pick up the full transport box and replace it with an empty transport ballot box. When our employee arrived at each City location, the ballots were counted by our employee and the City Clerk/Manager (2 people) to verify the total number of ballots being transported. Each person would sign the log sheet, write the seal numbers and how many ballots enclosed on the log sheet, put the completed and signed log sheet into the transport ballot box and seal the transport box. Once the transport box was in our office, two employees would break the seals and open the box, retrieving the log sheet, verifying the seal numbers and the ballot count for each transport box that was delivered. We kept track of each locations ballot count.

For Boonville, the sealed ballot box was wheeled out of the secure office location each morning, voted ballots were deposited by each voter throughout the day and wheeled back into the secure location at night. Every other day our employee would pick up the ballots. A Fairgrounds office employee would help our employee (2 people) verify the seal numbers on the ballot box, break the seal, count the ballots deposited, log the number of ballots, date and time of pick up and sign the log sheet. The completed and signed log sheet was put inside the transport bag and sealed. When the transport box was received in our office, we had the same procedure as explained above.

**R6 The Elections Office inquire if a signature validation feature is available from Hart InterCivic or other vendor to automate the signature verification process, requiring only manual validation for mis-matching signatures which will reduce staff workload and automatically identify potential mismatching signatures, reducing the possibility of human error.**

Response: Hart InterCivic is our "Tabulation" system vendor, we count ballots and produce (tabulate) results from Hart. DIMs/Runbeck is our Election Management System; Runbeck does have a Signature Verification/Recognition machine that is within a mail sorting machine, they are working on a desktop version – I have asked them for information on the desktop version.

Over the years, I have had many discussions with upset voters who believed VBM voting was not secure or safe; that anyone could sign their ballot and it would be counted. In the November 2020 election, every voter received a VBM ballot which led to having more phone calls like this than I ever had before. With each phone call, I explained our manual process – the VBM's come in (either via USPS, in person, a drop box or a polling place), an elections clerk removes the privacy flap from the envelope and scans their tray of ballots into the system with the barcode that is on each envelope. Once they are scanned, we begin checking signatures. 5 ballot signatures come up on the screen at a time, the signature we have on file is compared to the signature on the ballot envelope. The tray is checked, if there is a discrepancy the ballot is given to either myself or the Assistant ROV for approval/challenged. If the signature is challenged, we will call, email or mail them notification of the challenged signature with instruction on how to cure the signature. Once explained, the voters have been more accepting and feel more confident in our procedures and system.

**R7 Mendocino County's Executive Office notify the Elections Office at least one week in advance of any relocation of election-related materials and arrange for a representative of the Elections Office to supervise any relocation of election materials to avoid damages to equipment and budget liabilities to the department. The Elections Office must have independent and immediate access to any storage area housing its equipment.**

Executive Office to answer.

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**Ballot Retrieval Procedures – City of Point Arena**

The City of Point Arena (City) is assisting the Mendocino County Elections Department (County) with their Ballot Drop Box located at their facility. The County will deliver a “Ballot Drop Off” sandwich board sign, a Blue Ballot Box, instructions and log sheets to the City. We will explain the procedures in detail. The City Clerk will notify the Elections Department when the ballots begin arriving, The County will schedule the first pick up at that time. Ballots will be picked up every other day to start, then everyday as the number of ballots dropped off increase – i.e., closer to Election Day.

- 1) Two City employees (City Clerk or Manager & another employee) should gather and collect the ballots throughout the day from the Secure Drop Box provided by the City.
- 2) Both employees will take the ballots to the City Clerk’s office and count the ballots. Once both count the ballots and agree on the number, the number of ballots will be logged onto the first available section of the *City Ballot Drop-Off Chain of Custody Log Sheet*, complete the rest of that section. (If ballots are collected several times per day, please use as many sheets as necessary – you can make copies of the sheets.)
- 3) Deposit the ballots into the Blue Ballot Box provided by the County, if possible rubber band each ballot batch collected and put a note with the number of ballots in that batch on top.
- 4) This procedure will repeat each time the ballots are collected from the drop box. The Blue Ballot box is to be stored in a secure location.

CITY BALLOT DROP-OFF CHAIN OF CUSTODY LOG SHEET			
DROP-OFF LOCATION: Ballot Box # _____	Date: _____ Time: _____		
I hereby certify the ballot box for this location is delivered at the specific date and time to the City Clerk of _____ The ballot box is to be shipped and stored in a secure location. It will be picked up by a County Elections employee.			
Signature - County Elections Office _____		Signature - City Elections Official _____	
# Ballots Collected _____	Date: _____	Time: _____	am or pm Circle one
Signature _____		Signature _____	

The County will collect the Blue Ballot boxes and ballots, verifying the number of ballots collected with the City Clerk, and seal the Blue Ballot box for transport.

The County Elections Official will complete the Ballot Transport Log Sheet and have the City Clerk confirm the Ballot Box #, the Zipper Seal # and the Slot Seal #. Both will sign the log sheet.

BALLOT DROP BOX - CITY OF _____ BALLOT TRANSPORT LOG SHEET		
Date of Pick up: _____	Time of Pick up: _____	# of Ballots Picked up: _____
Once you remove the ballots from the drop box, count the ballots you are picking up & record the number. Record the seal numbers that will be used to seal the blue ballot box. Put this log sheet & the Chain of Custody log into blue ballot box. Seal the ballot slot & zipper for transport to Ukiah.		
Ballot Box # _____	Zipper Seal #: _____	Slot Seal #: _____

Collection times will be arranged with the City Clerk. The County will bring a fresh Blue Ballot Bag to trade with the City when the Blue Ballot Bag is ready for transport to Ukiah.

# CITY BALLOT DROP-OFF CHAIN OF CUSTODY LOG SHEET

DROP-OFF  
LOCATION: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Ballot Box # \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify the ballot box for this location is delivered at the specific date and time to the City Clerk of \_\_\_\_\_

The ballot box is to be zipped and stored in a secure location. It will be picked up by a County Elections employee.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature - County Elections Office

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature - City Elections Official

# Ballots  
Collected: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ am or pm  
Circle one

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

# Ballots  
Collected: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ am or pm  
Circle one

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

# Ballots  
Collected: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ am or pm  
Circle one

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

# Ballots  
Collected: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ am or pm  
Circle one

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

**Total Ballots**

Collected: \_\_\_\_\_

Please rubber band the ballots collected at each collection if possible.

Date of Transport: \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify I have collected and deposited the above # of ballots into the provided ballot box as instructed.

The ballot box has been stored in a secure location. The ballots were counted to verify the number reported  
ballot box slot & zipper are now sealed for transportation to the Elections office.

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Elections Official Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mendocino County Elections Official Signature

**Please deposit completed and signed sheet into ballot box before sealing slot.**

*Office use only - count and complete this section at the City Clerk's office::*

# of Ballots to be transported: \_\_\_\_\_

Same # as reported? \_\_\_\_\_

Y or N

Ballot Slot Seal #: \_\_\_\_\_

Zipper Seal # \_\_\_\_\_

**BALLOT DROP BOX - CITY OF \_\_\_\_\_  
BALLOT TRANSPORT LOG SHEET**

**Date of Pick up:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time of Pick up:** \_\_\_\_\_ **# of Ballots Picked up:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Once you remove the ballots from the drop box, count the ballots you are picking up & record the number. Record the seal numbers that will be used to seal the blue ballot box. Put this log sheet & the Chain of Custody log into blue ballot box. Seal the ballot slot & zipper for transport to Ukiah.*

Ballot Box # \_\_\_\_\_ Zipper Seal #: \_\_\_\_\_ Slot Seal #: \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify that I have retrieved & counted the ballots from the Ballot Drop Box at the date & time shown above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of County Elections Official*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Printed Name of County Elections Official*

I hereby certify that I witnessed the ballots being counted. I have verified the seal #'s that were put on the blue ballot box zipper and ballot slot at the date & time shown above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of City Elections Official*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Printed Name of City Elections Official*

**BALLOT DROP BOX - CITY OF \_\_\_\_\_  
BALLOT TRANSPORT LOG SHEET**

**Date of Pick up:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time of Pick up:** \_\_\_\_\_ **# of Ballots Picked up:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Once you remove the ballots from the drop box, count the ballots you are picking up & record the number. Record the seal numbers that will be used to seal the blue ballot box. Put this log sheet & the Chain of Custody log into blue ballot box. Seal the ballot slot & zipper for transport to Ukiah.*

Ballot Box # \_\_\_\_\_ Zipper Seal #: \_\_\_\_\_ Slot Seal #: \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify that I have retrieved & counted the ballots from the Ballot Drop Box at the date & time shown above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of County Elections Official picking up ballots*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Printed Name of County Elections Official*

I hereby certify that I witnessed the ballots being counted. I have verified the seal #'s that were put on the blue ballot box zipper and ballot slot at the date & time shown above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of City Elections Official*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Printed Name of City Elections Official*





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**Ballot Drop Off Location Procedures  
 Boonville Fair Office**

The Elections office will deliver the ballot drop box with all the required paperwork and seals. The paperwork will be kept in the Fair office in a metal construction clip board to keep everything organized.

The Fair Office staff has agreed to wheel the ballot box out to the lobby each morning and back into a secure office to be stored at the end of each day the office is open (M-F; 9am – 4pm).

Once ballots begin to be deposited into the drop box at the Boonville Fair Office, we ask the office staff to call the Elections Office so we can plan our ballot pick up. Please call (707) 234-6819 and ask for Skylar or Katrina.

When the Election Employee delivers the drop box, the Elections person will seal the box and ask the Fairgrounds staff member to:

- Verify the security seal against the *Security Seal Log* and initial the log.
- Each time the Elections Office picks up ballots the seal on the box will be broken, the ballots will be counted and the log will be updated.
- The Ballot Drop Box will be re-sealed by the Elections Employee.
- The Elections employee will review the procedures with the Fair office staff.

**VOTE BY MAIL - BALLOT DROP BOX  
 SECURITY SEAL LOG  
 NOVEMBER 3, 2020**

DROP BOX LOCATION: **BOONVILLE FAIR OFFICE**

DATE:	SEAL NUMBER:	# BALLOTS REMOVED	Election Employee INITIALS:	Fairgrounds Employee INITIALS:
		Ballot Box Drop off – please verify seal numbers & initial.		

The *Ballot Retrieval Log Sheet* will be completed, logging the number of ballots removed from the drop box, dated and signed by each party, each party will keep a copy. The Seal numbers will be logged onto the Retrieval Log Sheet, the log sheet will be put into the Blue Elections Box and sealed for transport to Ukiah.

**BALLOT DROP BOX - BOONVILLE  
 BALLOT RETRIEVAL LOG SHEET**

<b>Date of Pick up:</b>			<b>Time of Pick up:</b>			<b># of Ballots Picked up:</b>		
<i>Once you remove the ballots from the drop box, count the ballots you are picking up &amp; record the number.          Seal the Drop Box, recording the seal number on that log sheet; record the seal numbers for blue ballot box.          Put this log sheet into blue ballot box prior to sealing the ballot slot for transport to Ukiah.</i>								
<b>Ballot Box #</b>			<b>Zipper Seal #:</b>			<b>Slot Seal #:</b>		
I hereby certify that I have retrieved & counted the ballots from the Ballot Drop Box at the date & time shown above.								
<b>Signature of Elections Official</b>						<b>Printed Name of Elections Official</b>		
I hereby certify that I witnessed the ballots being retrieved and counted. I have verified the seal #s that were put on								

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**BALLOT DROP BOX - BOONVILLE  
BALLOT TRANSPORT LOG SHEET**

**Date of Pick up:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time of Pick up:** \_\_\_\_\_ **# of Ballots Picked up:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Once you remove the ballots from the drop box, count the ballots you are picking up & record the number. Record the seal numbers that will be used to seal the blue ballot box. Put this log sheet & the Chain of Custody log into blue ballot box. Seal the ballot slot & zipper for transport to Ukiah.*

**Ballot Box #** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zipper Seal #:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Slot Seal #:** \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify that I have retrieved & counted the ballots from the Ballot Drop Box at the date & time shown above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of County Elections Official*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Printed Name of County Elections Official*

I hereby certify that I witnessed the ballots being counted. I have verified the seal #'s that were put on the blue ballot box zipper and ballot slot at the date & time shown above.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**BALLOT DROP BOX - BOONVILLE  
BALLOT TRANSPORT LOG SHEET**

**Date of Pick up:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time of Pick up:** \_\_\_\_\_ **# of Ballots Picked up:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Once you remove the ballots from the drop box, count the ballots you are picking up & record the number. Record the seal numbers that will be used to seal the blue ballot box. Put this log sheet & the Chain of Custody log into blue ballot box. Seal the ballot slot & zipper for transport to Ukiah.*

**Ballot Box #** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zipper Seal #:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Slot Seal #:** \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify that I have retrieved & counted the ballots from the Ballot Drop Box at the date & time shown above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of County Elections Official picking up ballots*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Printed Name of County Elections Official*

I hereby certify that I witnessed the ballots being counted. I have verified the seal #'s that were put on the blue ballot box zipper and ballot slot at the date & time shown above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Boonville Fairgrounds Rep*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Printed Name of Boonville Fairgrounds Rep*