

Commissioners and Regina Plettenberg,
RE: Election Integrity (June 5th meeting)

We are writing to respond to you regarding what we perceive as your response(s) to information that was presented to you at the election integrity meeting June 5th, 2023. We are grateful that your doors are always open.

We believe that there was more than ample information given to warrant action from our elected officials. We feel that our elected officials are obliged to do their due diligence and take actions to ensure that Ravalli County has a secure and accurate election and yes, we believe that moving towards paper ballots would be the most logical choice.

The one issue the elected officials seemed to have was that they were not privy to ALL the information regarding the canvas which was done by the election integrity folks. We found the response to that issue from our elected officials was offensive and condescending. You (officials) were angry that they would not share all the private information and even seemed to question the results of the canvas all the while.....

Where were canvas results from one performed by the county? Was a canvas done? If there was, we didn't hear anything about it. Would a canvas from the county have possibly uncovered information that would have shown our election official(s) haven't been doing their job? And, to take the cake, even complain that the county received (complaints) from folks who were approached by the canvassing workers all the while.... Lets trust the nice guy from Butte who programs the voting machines because he's a nice guy and we still don't know what's in the operating system on the machines that we (taxpayers) are paying for each time the contract needs renewed. You (county officials) seemed to place more trust in outsiders than constituents within your own county. We surely can't be trusted to divulge information or, heaven forbid, hand count ballots. Would the county be allowed by law to share all the private information from an election canvas (names, addresses etc.)? We very much doubt it so you can understand why we were offended when your biggest concern seemed to be the obvious, unless you have written permission from everyone who participated in the canvas, you'd better not share any private information, and even if you do have permission, you'd might want to think twice. Curious, why didn't you take up the offer to do another canvas? Might sound paranoid but is the county afraid of what might be uncovered?

We are quite confused that Ms. Plettenberg considers (All election costs will be borne by the county) a gray area. If there is actually confusion then, we would question her ability to make informed decisions that would be related to her job and more importantly, to Ravalli County election integrity and subsequently should resign her elected position. Just a thought, if you (Ms. Plattenberg) were confused about taking outside money then, we would have thought a little common sense would have dictated that you would have investigated **before you APPLIED** for the funds.

We were surprised that (Ms. Plattenberg) was pretty certain that hand counting would result in a financial and logistical nightmare but, when queried about other (larger) counties in the country now using paper ballots and hand counting, you didn't seem to know anything about that. Not sure how you then arrived at your conclusion. The large counties in Missouri and California (now hand counting) actually saw savings as a result of hand counting but, all of you should check that out for yourselves and present genuine estimates to the taxpayers. Who approves funds needed for the voting machines and all associated costs? A note: those counties experienced pushback from the machine companies whose talking points were..... It'll be more costly, less accurate and a logistical nightmare, all of which ended up to be FAKE NEWS. And who is it that Ms. Plettenberg is concerned about getting grief from should the election results take a little longer? Just who works for who? We don't care how long as long as we've taken every measure to ensure a legitimate election. Without that, we don't have a Country, State or County.

It really saddens us to say what should be obvious, we have a trust issue with our elected officials. We are not interested in excuses, only results. Typically, we don't vote for incumbents, as we feel everyone who has the desire should have a chance to bring fresh ideas. And, unfortunately, more terms can make even the most honest official corrupt. We are not suggesting anyone is corrupt, just our reasoning when we vote. Having said that, we have veered away from our philosophies and voted for some of you as we felt you could be trusted. We will (probably) not make that same mistake in judgment again.

In closing, what if any action(s) does Ravalli County intend as a result of these uncertainties?

Thank you,

Randy and Jan Mellinger, Hamilton MT 406-274-0068

