




CITY AUDITOR'S OFFICE

TO: Mayor and Council Members
FROM: Margaret L. Krym, City Auditor 
DATE: February 13, 2017
SUBJECT: Ballot Counting – Proposed North 2 Underground Electric Distribution Project

Background

Management and the City Council were considering adding an Underground Electric Distribution Project (UEDP) to the already planned Utility Extension Projects (UEP) in the area defined as North 2 of Cape Coral. As a new assessment project in pre-plated areas of Cape Coral, Management desired to have input from the property owners. Management designed a survey instrument giving each property owner the opportunity to select one of the following:

- "For" proceeding with the North 2 Underground Electric Distribution Project.
- "Against" proceeding with the North 2 Underground Electric Distribution Project.

The purpose of the survey was to determine the public's interest in the project.

Management stated they mailed out 1,819 survey instruments to the registered property owners who would be affected by this project. Each ballot was identified uniquely by the property owner's name, mailing address and property strap number. For purposes of increasing the credibility of the ballot count, Management asked the City Auditor's Office to receive the ballots by mail and tally them.

Results of Count

The request sent to property owners directed them to return their ballot postmarked no later than January 31, 2017. Therefore, we stratified the ballots we received into two groups, those postmarked on or prior to January 31, 2017 and those postmarked after that date. In total we received 1,058 and of those 1,049 were postmarked on or prior to January 31, 2017, and nine were postmarked after that date.

The results of the counting were as follows:

	Ballots postmarked on or before January 31, 2017	Ballots postmarked after January 31, 2017	Total
For	327	4	331
Against	707	5	712
Other (blank)	15		15
	<u>1,049</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>1,058</u>

Therefore, over 67% of ballots received indicated that they were “Against” proceeding with the North 2 Underground Electric Distribution Project.

We performed this engagement at the request of Management and as a Nonaudit services engagement.

Scope and Objectives:

The City Auditor’s Office received, logged and safeguarded all ballots received. Those postmarked between the date of mailing by the City to the property owner and January 31, 2017 were tallied and those totals reported. We also tallied and reported those that were postmarked after January 31, 2017 and before publication of our count totals.

Objective One: Receive and safeguard all ballots. Most ballots were received by the City Clerk’s mailroom staff and some were delivered. They were then transported to the City Auditor’s mailbox in the Public Works building by mailroom staff. After the City Auditor’s Office collected them from the City Auditor’s mailbox we:

1. Verified that the ballot envelopes were received. (A few ballot envelopes delivered were opened since the envelope did not state City Auditor’s Office)
2. Verified the postmark date as either before or after January 31, 2017 and separate these into the two defined groups.
3. Opened each ballot and gave it a controlling number.
4. Attached the postmarked envelope to the ballot.
5. Retained all ballots in the numerically assigned sequence.

Objective Two: Tally all ballots received.

1. Each vote cast was entered into a spreadsheet and identified by the assigned number and the strap number, only.
2. Following inclusion of data from all ballots cast we electronically searched the data for duplicate strap numbers. No duplicate strap numbers or ballots were received.

3. The vote “For” or “Against” was then entered into the spreadsheet and the totals calculated. This process was repeated twice by two different count groups and both times the totals arrived at were identical.

Objective Three: Reporting of totals. Following the final summation, we are reporting the results of this work.

It should be noted that we did not verify any signatures, names or addresses or other personal identifying information.

Management Responsibilities:

Management requested our assistance with this engagement and was responsible for defining the above described scope and objectives and therefore is responsible for its outcome.

Nonaudit Services:

We performed this engagement as nonaudit services and it did not constitute an audit. However, the work was performed in compliance with generally accepted government auditing standards (GAGAS) as they related to nonaudit services.

C: John Szerlag, City Manager
Michael Ilczyszyn, Assistant City Manager
Dolores Menendez, City Attorney
Rebecca van Deutekom, City Clerk
Connie Barron, Public Affairs Director
Audit Committee