




December 5, 2017

TO: Mayor Teresa Jacobs  
-AND-  
Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Ajit M. Lalchandani, County Administrator 

SUBJECT: New Equipment and Construction Request  
**DISCUSSION AGENDA ITEM DECEMBER 19, 2017**

At the December 19, 2017 Board meeting, Bill Cowles, Orange County Supervisor of Elections, will make a presentation regarding a request for new equipment and construction to support a shift in voter preference to either Early Voting or Vote by Mail. The request is further explained in the attached letter from Mr. Cowles.

Please let me know if you require further information. This item is for information, only, and no action is requested of the Board at this time.

Attachment

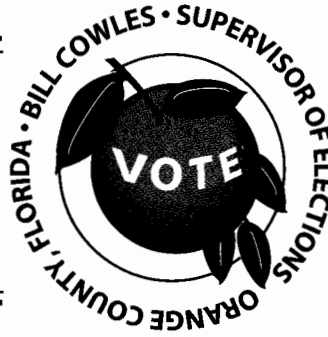
AML/cjg

cc: Bill Cowles, Orange County Supervisor of Elections

---

**BILL COWLES**  
Supervisor of Elections  
Orange County, Florida

---

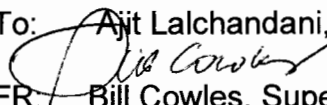


---

OUR MISSION IS TO:  
*Ensure the integrity of the electoral process.  
Enhance public confidence.  
Encourage citizen participation.*

---

November 27, 2017

To:  Ajit Lalchandani, County Administrator  
FR: Bill Cowles, Supervisor of Elections  
RE: New equipment and construction request

The traditional scenario of voters going to their polling place on Election Day to cast their ballot has changed in Florida generally and in Orange County specifically. For instance, in the 2016 General Election over 73% of voters cast their ballot prior to Election Day, either via Early Voting or Vote by Mail. In order to meet the immediate challenges of this shift in voter preference, I need to make several improvements to my operations to ensure accurate and timely election results.

Accordingly, our existing Vote by Mail equipment is not capable of accommodating the projected volume and needs to be upgraded. The existing equipment is also nearing its useful life and will be traded in for market value towards the new equipment.

The main piece of equipment that is required to address the increased volume of Vote by Mail ballots is a sorter. This new sorter equipment will not fit into the existing space in the main building and must be relocated to our adjacent warehouse location.

As a result, the relocation for the new equipment will necessitate moving the existing Election Supplies room and break area to other locations within the warehouse. The space vacated within the main building will be used to relocate the Early Voting office and training area. This will put the Early Voting operation closer to the Elections Division staff that oversees Early Voting.

I spoke with Paul Sladek, Manager, County Real Estate Management and with William "Sonny" Bishop, Kaley Investment, our landlord, concerning the tenant improvements. Mr. Bishop is willing to work with the county as he has with prior construction at this site.

Unfortunately, we did not have all of the information necessary to accurately request funding during our budget submittal on May 1, 2017 for this fiscal year 2018 budget. Additionally, as you are aware, on October 31<sup>st</sup>, my Office returned to the Board of County Commissioners over \$700,000 in unspent funds (excess fees) from Fiscal Year 2017.

The total estimated cost for the entire project including new equipment and construction is \$950,000. We have carefully reviewed our current budget and determined that we can appropriate \$250,000 for this purpose. Therefore, I am respectfully requesting additional funding from the County in the amount of \$700,000 during the Annual Budget Amendment in January of 2018 to support this important project.

With prior countywide voter turnout data supporting the shift in how voters will cast their vote in the future; with continual increase in the number of registered voters (currently over 800,000 registered) and the demands for accurate and timely results each and every election, it is imperative that we make these operational changes in order to be successful in 2018 and future elections. I welcome the opportunity to speak directly with you, any other county staff involved, and the Board of County Commissioners. We appreciate all of your support and sincerely hope we can move forward with this request.

Sincerely,

Bill Cowles  
Orange County  
Supervisor of Elections

Cc: Randy Singh, Assistant County Administrator  
Kurt Peterson, OMB, Manager  
Paul Sladek, Real Estate Management, Manager  
Ray Walls, OMB, Assistant Manager