

PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Subject:        Audit of Election Equipment and Conduct of City of Traverse City’s  
November 2019 Election**

**Issued by:**    Grand Traverse County Clerk Bonnie Scheele (231) 922-4760  
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On December 11, 2019, an extensive audit of the Traverse City City Commission election of November 5, 2019, was conducted as randomly-selected by the Department of State. The audit included analysis and examination of documents and procedures used by the City Clerk’s team leading up to the election and the procedures and documentation from a randomly-selected voting precinct, which was City of Traverse City Precinct 8, as well as the Absent Voter Counting Board for Precinct 8.

Importantly, the independent audit, conducted in accordance with Department of State regulations, also included a hand count of the vote totals in a randomly-selected race, which confirmed that it matched 100% with the reported results.

One of City Clerk Benjamin Marentette’s areas of responsibility is planning, managing and overseeing all aspects of federal, state and local elections within Traverse City. Marentette serves on the Michigan Election Modernization Team, which is comprised of 25 national and local election experts and election scholars, appointed by Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, whose charge is to develop the roadmap for implementing voter reforms approved by Michigan voters in November 2018 which are enshrined in the Michigan Constitution. The team is also making recommendations for modernizing Michigan’s election process to make it easier to vote and harder to cheat. Marentette noted, “At the center of all of our team discussions is ensuring Michigan’s elections – the entire apparatus – is rooted in practice that cements voter confidence. Conducting random audits such as this one is key to ensuring we have elections where everyone knows that their vote will count. Having a post-election audit is another important way to police our elections. ... and of course, I am very pleased that the audit of one of Traverse City’s voting precincts demonstrates the professionalism and tenacity of the election team’s commitment to excellence.”

Grand Traverse County Clerk Bonnie Scheele, with decades of professional election administration experience, was pleased with the audit, saying, “Audits like this are important for several reasons, and the most important of those reasons is ensuring the methods and manner in which elections are conducted guarantees accuracy. As election officials, we are responsible to forever-protect the fabric of democracy and that is done through multiple stages of double-checks, including after-the-fact checks like this audit.”

