

CITY & BOROUGH OF JUNEAU

Elections Policies & Procedures

SECTION 3.15 Hand Count Procedures

Effective Date: 8/26/2026

Pursuant to CBJ Code 29.07.005, these Election Policies and Rules of Procedure may not be amended within 40 days before an election through final certification of that election. These policies remain in effect until superseded by an updated version.

3.15 HAND COUNT PROCEDURES

In the event of equipment malfunction that prevents election workers from scanning or adjudicating ballots, the Election Official may direct that ballots be hand counted using the following procedure. All hand counting must be conducted in teams of two and under the direct supervision of an Election Official.

Initial Ballot Count:

1. **Organize and count the ballots.** Election workers shall place the voted paper ballots face up and organize them into groups of 25. Groups of 25 may be combined into crisscrossed stacks of 100 or 500 ballots.
2. **Verify the count.** Team members shall compare their counts. If the counts do not agree, the ballots shall be recounted until the team reaches an agreed total.
3. **Record the total.** The Election Worker shall record the verified total number of regular voted ballots on the designated hand count worksheet.

Counting Single Option Races

Single option races are where a voter may only choose one option. For a race with candidates, the voter will be instructed to “choose not more than one”; for a proposition they can choose either “yes” or “no”.

The team shall count each race separately, beginning with the first single option race appearing on the ballot. Teams will count all single option races before any multi-member races.

1. **Sort the ballots.** For each race, sort the ballots according to the vote(s) cast.

- a. **Candidate or ballot options.** Create a separate stack for each candidate or ballot option, including any verified write-in candidates.
 - b. **No Vote Tallied.** Create a separate “No Vote Tallied” stack for ballots on which no vote can be tallied for the race, including ballots that are blank, contain an unverified write-in candidate, or contain an overvote. Ballots placed in this stack shall be reviewed by an Election Official.
 - c. **Adjudication needed.** Create a separate “Adjudication needed” stack for all ballots which have written voter intent, strikethroughs, or an invalid mark. Ballots placed in this stack shall be reviewed and adjudicated by the Election Official.
2. **Adjudication.** The Election Official will adjudicate ballots from the “adjudication needed” stack, placing them in the appropriate candidate, ballot option, or no vote tallied stack. The Election Official, using a RED pen, will write their decision on the ballot.
3. **Count the stacks.** Once the ballots have been sorted, each team member shall independently count the ballots and votes in each stack.
4. **Verify the counts.** Team members shall compare their counts for each stack. If the counts do not agree, the applicable stack shall be recounted until the team reaches an agreed count.
5. **Record the results.** Record the verified number of votes tallied for each candidate or ballot proposition and the number of ballots in the “No Vote Tallied” category on the designated hand count worksheet.
6. **Reconcile the race.** Each ballot may result in no more than one vote being tallied for the race. The number of ballots accounted for among the candidate stack(s) and the “No Vote Tallied” category must equal the verified total number of regular voted ballots.
7. **Resolve discrepancies.** If the race does not reconcile or a discrepancy cannot be resolved through recounting, stop the count for that race and notify the Election Official. The Election Official shall determine the appropriate action before the team proceeds.

Complete all races. Once the race is tallied and deemed complete, return the ballots to their container and continue the hand count process with the next single option race on the ballot until all single option races and propositions have been counted and reconciled.

Counting Multi-member Races

1. **Sort out ballots that need review.**

- a. **No Vote Tallied.** Create a separate “No Vote Tallied” stack for ballots on which no vote can be tallied for the race, including ballots that are blank, contain only unverified write-in candidate(s), or contain an overvote. Ballots placed in this stack shall be reviewed by an Election Official.
 - b. **Adjudication needed.** Create a separate “Adjudication needed” stack for all ballots which have written voter intent, strikethroughs, or an invalid mark. Ballots placed in this stack shall be reviewed and adjudicated by the Election Official.
2. **Count one candidate at a time**
 - a. Create two stacks. One stack that includes all remaining ballots voting FOR the first candidate in the race, and one stack that includes all remaining ballots NOT voting for the first candidate in the race.
 - b. Double count and verify the total, then record it.
 - c. The Election Official will then review all “adjudication needed” ballots for any valid votes for the first candidate, then add it to the total. The Election Official will write, in RED INK, their decision on the ballot.
 - d. After the count is done, “Adjudication needed” ballots go back into their separate stack.
 - e. Repeat the process for each candidate in the race.
3. **Record the results.** Record the verified number of votes tallied for each candidate and the number of ballots in the “No Vote Tallied” category on the designated hand count worksheet.
4. **Reconciliation:** In a multi-seat race a voter may vote for more than one candidate, up to the number of seats to be filled. To reconcile, first multiply the total number of open seats times the number of ballots in the stack; this is the maximum number of votes allowed. Then add the results from all candidates, including certified write-ins. This number should not exceed the maximum allowed.
5. **Resolve discrepancies.** If the race does not reconcile or a discrepancy cannot be resolved through recounting, stop the count for that race and notify the Election Official. The Election Official shall determine the appropriate action before the team proceeds.

Handling Ballots During the Hand Count

1. Ballots shall remain under the control of election workers and the Election Official throughout the hand count.
2. Workers will only use red ink to fill out their worksheets.

3. Teams shall maintain the integrity of the ballots and shall not mark, alter, or otherwise modify voted ballots. Only the Election Official may write on a ballot with RED ink when adjudicating.
4. After a race has been counted, ballots shall be returned to their container before proceeding to the next race.
5. Any ballot requiring an Election Official's review shall be kept separate from the completed stacks until the review is completed.
6. The Election Official shall ensure that all hand count worksheets are complete and that any required initials, signatures, or other documentation are completed before the hand count is finalized.