

# TIOGA COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

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## Commissioners

Bernadette M. Toombs  
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## Deputy Commissioners

Vera Lin Layman  
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## 2021 Annual Report to Tioga County

January 25, 2022

The year 2021 was an important election year for our local government. All nine county legislators were up for election, as well as the District Attorney, County Treasurer, and a Coroner. Each of our towns had four to five positions on the ballot. Additionally, two State Supreme Court Justices in the 6<sup>th</sup> Judicial District were up for election, and a third position was added to the slate due to an expansion of the State Supreme Court. Five statewide proposals were also included on the ballot. Below is a brief recap of the year.

- We replaced our 26 aging Dominion ballot marking device voting machines with the newer, more secure, and more efficient Dominion ImageCast Evolution (ICE) machines.
- Petition signature requirements were once again reduced due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Primary Election was held June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021.
  - Local Republican primaries were held in Barton, Berkshire, Newark Valley, and Owego for positions such as Town Justice, Councilman, and Superintendent of Highways.
  - Early Voting turnout was very low.
- Election Worker recruitment appeared to start off strong, with enough people signing up so that almost every training class would be filled to capacity. *However*, about 20% of the people who signed up for training did not show up. We ended up being short 20 workers for Election Day.
- Election Day was November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021.
  - Total voter turnout was a dismal 27%, a far cry from the numbers we saw for the 2020 presidential election.
  - Several towns saw significant, albeit unsuccessful, write-in campaigns. The town council race in Candor almost came close enough to trigger a manual recount.
  - The town proposition in Richford was decided by a margin of five votes, and a manual recount was conducted. The recount resulted in no change to the number of votes.
- The year was closed out with the passage of additional election reform laws on December 22.
  - Early Voting weekend hours will expand from five hours to eight hours per day.
  - The section of Election Law regarding canvass of absentee, military, special, and affidavit ballots was repealed and replaced. We will now have to begin canvassing and counting absentee ballots prior to Election Day, but absentee results will not be released until Election Night.
  - The online absentee application portal that was temporarily in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic will now be a permanent means of applying for an absentee.
  - An absentee ballot tracking system will be implemented by the NYS Board of Elections so absentee voters can easily look up the status of their absentee ballot.