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### Civic Duty

Workers who are going to be working as an Election Poll Officer must be sixteen years of age or older, and they must also go through a training session. To work an election poll some of the duties are hanging posters, making sure the people/person are in the right location, checking people in, and help with voting if someone requests. A lot of people had already early voted because of the covid pandemic. Also, everyone had to wear extra personal protective equipment, and this made for a very long day.

I am a seventeen-year-old girl who is a senior in high school. This was an awesome experience for me to watch and help with the voting process. I have never had the privilege of voting myself, so I was nervous for this opportunity and excited at the same time. I really did not have any idea of what to expect. I was scared that someone would ask me a question, and I would not have the correct response. Luckily, I had some amazing instructors right by my side.

The Election Poll Officer training was probably the most important aspect of the voting process. Upon arrival for the training, the first thing the instructors did was to distribute the manual of the agenda to be covered in the training. The training begins by looking at a few sample ballots. These ballots include: Presidential, State Senate, House of Representatives, Mayor, and Alderman. If a voter needed assistance, then the Poll Officer who assisted the voter must complete a record of assistance form. During the training the instructor had us view these forms so that we would know how to fill them out. The next step was to learn how to set up the

poll pad which contains: a poll pad, a poll pad base, USB power adapter, two stylus, ID tray, and a printer with cords. Once everything was in place, the instructor went over how to use the poll pad. The poll pad has many features such as: verifying the voter's information, locating the voter's record, and processing the voter. At the end of the training, we then must learn how to pack up all of our supplies.

There are many duties when you serve as an Election Poll Officer. These duties begin with arriving an hour before the polls open to set up the stations for the voters and to hang posters that show voters where to go. These posters direct voters to the registration table, the voting machines, the handicap voting area, and to the bathrooms. These posters also show what voters are expected to have when they arrive at their designated precinct to vote, such as a picture ID and their voter's registration card. All voters must first check in at the voter's registration desk. This is where the Poll Officers check the voter's information to make sure they are in the correct location based on their district. If everything is valid the Poll Officer must initial a form that states that all the information is correct, and the worker can then direct the voter on to the voting machines. On arrival to the voting machines the voters must know how to operate the machine. The machine is not complicated, but the Poll Officer must explain how to work the machine. If the voter has any questions or needs any help, then the Poll Officer must assist the voter at their request. Some people cannot read, and they need assistance at the machines. The Poll Officer cannot state their opinion in any way, but they must answer the voter's questions in a way that does not sway the voter in any direction. Once the voter has made their choices on all the candidates, they must push the big red button. This completes the voting process.

Due to the covid-19 pandemic, there were multiple safety precautions that were put in place. The Poll Officers had to stay behind a plexiglass barrier while wearing a mask and face shield. The voters had to always stand six feet apart in all locations. The voters were given a plastic bag that contained an ink pen, plastic glove, and their “I voted” sticker. The Poll Officers were not allowed to touch these items. If the voter did not want to keep the items used, then there was a trash bin available for disposal. The Poll Officer was also not allowed to touch the voter’s picture ID or the voter’s registration card. There was a tray on the poll pad that scans the voter’s information for the Poll Officer. Other precautions were wiping down the voting machines, the tables, and the door handles with antibacterial wipes.

I was so excited to have a role in the 2020 Election. Next year I will be eighteen years of age, and I will know exactly what to expect. If I get to work the polls again next year, then the training will be a review. I will already know all of the duties and requirements to be an Election Poll Officer. Hopefully next year our nation will not have to take all of the same precautions as this year.