

November 19th, 2013 | by [Erica Felci](#) | [5 Comments](#)

Desert Hot Springs recount starts Thursday



Riverside County election officials on Thursday will start recounting the 2,412 ballots Desert Hot Springs voters cast in the mayoral race.

The process will start at 9 a.m., with eight people conducting a hand count of every vote.

The recount was formally requested by Desert Hot Springs Mayor Yvonne Parks, who lost her re-election bid by just 12 votes to Councilman Adam Sanchez.

The final tally shows Sanchez got 1,042 votes, or 43.2 percent, to Parks' 1,030 votes, or 42.7 percent.

Economist John-Paul Valdez garnered 340 votes.

Desert Hot Springs Mayor Yvonne Parks listens to City Council member Adam Sanchez during a meeting where elected officials discussed the financial state of the city on Tuesday, Nov. 12, 2013. (Omar Ornelas, The Desert Sun)

"We anticipate we'll be able to hand count all the ballots in 2 days," said Rebecca Spencer, assistant registrar of voters.

"We have to count the whole contest."

Parks has asked election officials to count the paper ballots first, and has prioritized the count based on precincts.

A Desert Sun review of the first three precincts show Parks bested Sanchez in the vote-by-mail count. But Sanchez then beat Parks in the votes cast at the polls.

Because so few people voted in the other two precincts, the vote breakdown was not released to protect voter privacy.

Whoever requests the recount must cover the costs.

Parks will be charged \$2,273.76 each day the recount is conducted. She has already paid for the first day.

Parks can call it off at any point. If she ends the recount early, the certified final result stands.

Each candidate is allowed to have three people in the recount room. Additional observers can watch the process from a separate area.

Sanchez was losing in initial tallies of the vote. He surged ahead as election officials reviewed 140 provisional ballots and the later-arriving by-mail votes.

Parks' recount request was dated Friday, when city hall was closed. It became public on Monday.

After paper ballots are counted, Parks will have the county count electronic ballots, followed by challenged vote-by-mail and provisional ballots.

She's also asked for a review of empty vote-by-mail and provisional ballots, as well as the polling place rosters.

The Riverside County Registrar's official statement of vote indicates votes were cast in only five of the 12 precincts.

This is the only recount Riverside County officials are doing for the Nov. 5 election.

But it is certainly not the first recount of a Coachella Valley contest.

Last November, Cathedral City mayoral challenger Chip Yarborough sought a recount after losing by 13 votes to Mayor Kathy DeRosa.

After one day, and no significant change in the final results, Yarborough called it off and urged his supporters to "support the council as we move forward."

A similar situation happened in April 2010, after now-Councilman Scott Hines beat planning commission Ira Laufer by 11 votes.

"I want them to check the signatures," Parks has told The Desert Sun. "I don't trust him. There's just something fishy."

Sanchez has defended his campaign and expressed confidence the final tally will confirm his win.

