

Michael Tonsager Calls for Expanded Post-Election Hand Audits in Sherburne County MN

Candidate for County Auditor cites new CISA findings on election system vulnerabilities and urges stronger verification beyond state minimums

ELK RIVER MN, MN, UNITED STATES, July 30, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Michael Tonsager](#) Calls for Expanded Post-Election Hand Audits in Sherburne County Candidate for County Auditor cites new CISA findings on election system vulnerabilities and urges stronger verification beyond state minimums

Michael Tonsager, candidate for [Sherburne County Auditor](#), today released an updated policy position calling for more rigorous post-election manual reviews of paper ballots. Citing the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency's (CISA) Election Report (as of July 13, 2026), Tonsager said the county must move beyond bare-minimum compliance to provide voters greater confidence that results are accurate and secure.

"The CISA report confirms what many of us have long understood: election software, like all complex systems, contains vulnerabilities, and many local networks lack the defenses vendors assume are in place," Tonsager said. "We cannot rely solely on machines. Human-readable paper ballots paired with meaningful hand audits are essential safeguards. Sherburne County currently reviews only three randomly selected precincts. That is not enough. As Auditor, I will expand these reviews to give voters the confidence they deserve."

The CISA report, based on technical assessments conducted from 2019 to 2024 at the request of system owners and operators, found that election-related software often operates with known, unpatched vulnerabilities due to fragmented certification rules and delayed patching. It also documented recurring weaknesses in state, local, tribal, and territorial networks, including limited segmentation, weak identity management, and insufficient monitoring. In multiple



Michael Tonsager for Sherburne County Auditor

assessments, CISA personnel gained full network control within hours or days.

Among its mitigation recommendations, CISA explicitly urged election officials to:

- Use human-readable paper ballots.
- Conduct [post-election manual audits of paper ballots](#) to confirm that voting systems function as intended and to identify errors prior to certification of results.

Tonsager's position paper notes that Minnesota law already allows counties to exceed the minimum Post-Election Review requirements. For a county of Sherburne's size, the current practice samples only three precincts for a limited number of top races. He proposes:

- Increasing the number of precincts reviewed in every general election.
- Exploring additional races for manual audit where feasible.
- Maximizing transparency through public observation and clear reporting.
- Working with the County Canvassing Board and state officials to incorporate stronger, risk-limiting audit principles consistent with CISA guidance.

"These steps require no new legislation—only leadership and a commitment to best practices," Tonsager said. "Voters deserve more than the bare minimum. They deserve maximum confidence that every vote is counted accurately. Rigorous verification is not partisan. It is essential."

Tonsager, a U.S. Navy veteran and local resident with a master's degree in strategic leadership, is running to bring greater transparency, accountability, and modernized processes to the County Auditor's office.

For media inquiries or to request the full position paper, contact: Michael Tonsager Campaign
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About Michael Tonsager Michael Tonsager is a candidate for Sherburne County Auditor. A U.S. Navy veteran who held a Top Secret security clearance, he brings more than 15 years of experience managing high-volume operations and a commitment to transparent, secure local government. This is a non-partisan campaign paid for by the Campaign Fund of Michael Tonsager.

Link To CISA Document <https://www.whitehouse.gov/election-integrity/>

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