Scenarios for City of Madison Elections Training/Tabletop Exercise
October 21, 2020

Scenario 1

It is a few days before the election. The City Clerk receives a call reporting a tweet from @Crowdcontrol stating that in an effort to avoid overcrowding at the polls, a two-day voting process would take place. According to the tweet, all Party X voters will vote on November 3, 2020, while all Party Y voters will vote on November 4, 2020. Later the say day, the city receives a second phone call regarding a follow-up tweet stating "11/3 is for Party X ONLY! Party Y voters stay home – or else!"

Scenario 2

Approximately 2 weeks prior to the General Election, the Wisconsin Elections Commission contacts municipal clerks to advise that numerous suspicious emails were received by elections officials around the state with a potentially malicious zip file attachment. The email had the subject "New Absentee Ballot Report for Elections Officials" and requested the recipient open an attachment entitled "Report.zip." State elections officials sent out an email to all municipal clerks requesting a response on whether they had received the email and opened the zip file with the password provided in the email. Several clerks confirmed receipt of the email but did not open the attachment. The Madison City Clerk advised that a staff member had opened the attachment and extracted the contents of the zip file, which in turn encrypted local voter registration information (or other essential computer system) with a message that the files would be released upon a payment of ransom in bitcoin. A short time later, the Clerk's Twitter feed begins to post unauthorized messages appearing to announce results from absentee ballots that have been submitted.

Scenario 3

On Election Day, a campus polling location, the Nicholas Recreation Center, is reporting that a high number of protestors calling themselves "American Patriots" have set up barricades at the front door of the polling place and presented badges making it appear they are U.S. Marshals. One protestor assaulted a poll worker who requested that he wear a mask before acting as an observer. When law enforcement responds, some protestors began demonstrating and attempt to block the entrance. In response, a crowd of students gather and the counter protest begins to escalate. Two members who appear to be part of the American Patriots group are seen openly displaying handguns.

Scenario 4

At 10:00 a.m., at a Senior Center polling place, Attic Angel Place, a voter pulls down his mask to announce his name and states that he has COVID while coughing over the ballot table. Voters behind him in line scatter to the hallway outside the voting area. The election inspector checking in the voter says she is concerned about exposure and can no longer work at the polls.

Scenario 5

The Water Utility is called to a water main break outside of the Olbrich Gardens polling place. Repairs require blocking off traffic leading to the parking lot. It is initially unclear how long repairs will take. Traffic access is blocked from 10:00 – 11:00. Prior to blocking off the street, only 5 voters were in the polling place.

Scenario 6

At 9:45 p.m. on Election Night, the City Clerk is ready to post final election results. The webpage begins to blink off and on with an official-looking message stating "All Votes Lost."   The local news is about to go live with the story. The image spreads quickly on social media and a crowd begins to gather outside the City-County building.