



BOARD OF ELECTIONS WORK SESSION MINUTES

Tuesday, February 25, 2020, 1:00 P.M.

Willowbank Office Building
420 Holmes Street, Room 146
Bellefonte, PA 16823

I. CALL TO ORDER

The public meeting of the Centre County Board of Elections was convened at 1:07 PM by Chair of the Board of Elections Steven Dershem.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

In attendance were Commissioner Chair Michael Pipe, Commissioner Mark Higgins, Commissioner Steven Dershem, Administrator Margaret Gray, Director of Elections Joyce McKinley, Elections Coordinator Jodi Nedd and Executive Office Supervisor Natalie Smith.

County personnel present included Nick Barger, Chad Joyce and Nate Smitchko, RBA.

III. MINUTES

On a motion by Commissioner Pipe seconded by Commissioner Higgins the Board voted unanimously to approve the Minutes of the Board of Elections Meeting held on Thursday, January 9, 2020.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Polling Locations

i. Penn State University Precincts

Commissioner Pipe met with Penn State Director of Government and Community Relations, Charima Young and Zach Moore regarding the change in University precincts. The student government is willing to help communicate information with the student body, staff, and alumni. They understood the need for a change and thought it would be very helpful on Election Day. Commissioner Pipe shared his presentation of changes at the HUB. He met with staff to discuss the layout and they will have it set up for Election Day.

ii. Precinct 29 State College East Central 2 previously voted at the Borough and is being moved to St. Paul's United Methodist Church.

iii. Precinct 26 and Precinct 30 previously voted at the Friends Meeting House, constituent Peg Hambrick voiced concerns about inadequate space at an Election Board meeting last year. One precinct will be moved to the Borough Hall.

B. Resolution

Commissioner Pipe and Joyce discussed adoption of a resolution outlining the reasons for rejection of voter registration forms. They will have County Solicitor Betsy Dupuis draft the resolution to be presented to the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Pipe feels this will establish a set of guidelines for rejection and help voter registration campaigns from sharing misinformation.

C. Palm Card

Joyce provided an estimate of \$457 to order 5,000 cards outlining changes with Act 77. She asked if the Board would like her to look into mass mailing by household and Commissioner Pipe said yes, if the Department of State would allow the County to use their bulk mailing permit. This would provide another avenue to educate citizens. Both sides of the card would be printed to provide information such as how to find your precinct or update your address.

D. Senior Centers – Education of Voters

The Board suggested leaving some of the printed cards at the senior centers.

E. Security – Election’s Office

The Election’s Office has a paper folder that is used by several departments. It is located in the same room where Jodi does coding. To avoid disruption, the Board suggested moving the folder or asking departments to call and make arrangements to use the machine at a more convenient time.

F. Ballot Storage

Joyce provided recommendation of a storage location for the absentee and mail-in ballots that are received. With installation of a new lockset, ballots would be received, sorted by precinct and locked in this location until they are opened on election night. Commissioner Pipe suggested reviewing other County’s that have a similar process and see how they store ballots. Georgia will be voting on March 24 and he suggested potentially visiting to see how they store and process ballots. Jodi asked Commissioner Pipe if he could contact them to see if they would be willing to share any policies or procedures that help the process to run smooth.

G. Absentee Balloting

Voters who are unable to go to the polls should apply for an absentee ballot. Voters who will be away from their municipality should apply for a mail-in ballot.

H. Voting Systems in Storage

The County’s old voting systems are being stored in Philipsburg. The vendor for the new system, Election Systems and Software (ES&S) has offered to take and dispose of them at no charge. Joyce asked the Board how they would like to handle the disposition, which must also be approved by Harrisburg because the machines were purchased with HAVA funds. Commissioner Pipe asked Joyce to check with the Department of State to see what their recommendation is.

I. Updates

Chad worked with Commissioner Pipe to update the election website, CentreCountyVotes.com is now redirected to the County page.

The new ballot scanner is on schedule to arrive in March, with the second one arriving before the General Election.

Nick has prepared a more scalable way of reporting, with the server being replaced and upgraded there should not be any outages on Election night. The Board discussed what information will be reported and asked if it would be consistent with neighboring counties. A disclaimer will need to be communicated that the results are unofficial and do not include absentee or mail in ballots. Nate will process a cumulative total and send the data to Nick for precinct reporting. Commissioner Pipe requested a demonstration of the process in March. The Board may consider directing citizens to the State website for results.

V. ELECTION ANNOUNCEMENTS

Wednesday, March 4, 2020

Last day for withdrawal by candidates who filed nomination petitions.

Monday, April 13, 2020

Last day to REGISTER before the primary.

Tuesday, April 21, 2020

Last day to apply for a mail-in or civilian absentee ballot.

Tuesday, April 28, 2020

GENERAL PRIMARY

Last day for County Board of Elections to receive voted mail-in and civilian absentee ballots. Must be received by 8PM.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Commissioner Pipe, seconded by Commissioner Higgins, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 2:21 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Natalie Smith
Executive Office Supervisor