



BOARD OF ELECTIONS MINUTES RETURN BOARD

Thursday, May 20, 2021, 2:00 P.M.

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

Virtual – [Zoom](#)

I. CALL TO ORDER

The public meeting of the Centre County Board of Elections was convened at 2:12 PM by Chair of the Board, Commissioner Steven Dershem.

In attendance were Commissioner Michael Pipe, Commissioner Mark Higgins, Commissioner Steven Dershem, Administrator Margaret Gray, Voter Registration Coordinator Latisha Stefanko, Election Coordinator Jodi Nedd, ES&S Technician Drew Ayers, and Staff Assistant Jillian Savage.

County personnel present included Jason Moser, Samantha Reese, District Attorney Bernie Cantorna, Cris Norris, and Krista Davis.

Guests present included Michelle Young, Matt Young, Kara Kavala, Jeremie Thompson, Carol Gingrich, Lisa Bier, Brandy Reiter, Penny, Mark Long, Amanda Rummel, Jennifer Dellantonio, Linda Sheckler, Doris Eirich, Bryan Tulwits, Nancy Snyder, Phyllis Austin, Cathy Zarillo, Vicky Vonada, Kristine Eng, Theodore Dunner, Tim Rodgers, Kris Hopkins, Michelle Schellberg, and Jennifer Money.

Media present included Peyton Kennedy and Geoff Rushton.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

- Public comment was offered regarding the shortage of Republican ballots at polling locations from:
 - Jennifer Dellantonio, Rush Township
 - Phyllis Austin, Bellefonte Borough
 - Tim Rogers, Gregg Township
 - Theodore Dunner, Potter Township
 - Jennifer Moeny, Ferguson Township
 - Nancy Snyder, Rush Township
- Bryan Tulwits of Rush Township offered public comment regarding poll worker training.
- Michelle Schellberg of Halfmoon Township offered public comment regarding recertification of Centre County 2020 General Election.
- Tim Rogers of Gregg Township offered public comment regarding failing constituents.
- Nancy Snyder of Rush Township offered public comment regarding the advertising of Board of Elections meetings.
- Retired police officer from Centre County offered public comment regarding Center for Tech and Civic Life grant and ballot return and collection process.
- Kristen Eng of Ferguson Township offered public comment regarding the process of elections in Centre County, and transparency.

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- Cathy Zarillo of State College Borough offered public comment regarding the need for training for a better result.
- Linda Sheckler of Spring Township offered public comment regarding the formula used to order ballots and the Sure System.

Commissioner Pipe explained the formula used to order ballots is from guidance that Act 77 put into place. Ten percent was added to the highest voter turnout from the last three municipal elections for each precinct. Using precinct 15 as an example, 29 was the highest voter turnout, adding the 10 percent, the calculated total was used, and 50 ballots were ordered. Due to an error on the spreadsheet, the calculated values for precincts 26-91 dropped down by two rows, causing a surplus of Republican ballots in these precincts 26, 29, 30, 34, 35, 38, 39, 40, 43, 44, 45, 46, 49, 50, 54, 55, 58, 59, 61, 62, 63, 66, 67, 70, 72, 73, 74, 75, 77, 80, 81, 85, 87, 88, and 91, while precincts 31, 32, 36, 37, 41, 42, 47, 48, 51, 52, 53, 56, 57, 60, 64, 65, 68, 69, 71, 76, 78, 79, 82, 83, 84, 89 had a shortage of Republican ballots.

Commissioner Pipe addressed these important topics from the public session:

- Missing Board of Elections meeting videos from website
- Using different local newspapers to advertise the Board of Elections meetings
- Center for Tech and Civic Life Grant - \$80,000 left for the primary, all allocated
- Drop Boxes – return and collection plan has been posted on the website
- Philipsburg ballot box collection procedures not followed by deputy
- Need for a bipartisan group
- Other voting options were available for use at all precincts for the shortage of Republican ballots, including mail-in, civilian absentee, provisional, on-demand printed ballots with no number, and ExpressVote. All ballots were able to be scanned into the DS200 at the polls and be counted.

Commissioner Pipe stated there were no races compromised in terms of a race where there was a one vote difference.

The Board agreed to facilitate a special meeting to discuss a path to move forward.

III. NEW BUSINESS

A. Adjudication of Civilian Absentee ballots and Mail-In ballots

Commissioner Dershem and Commissioner Higgins verified the seals on ballot receptacles with the vote-by-mail processing room Change of Custody form.

1. 370 ballots were scanned on DS450 and were unreadable on Tuesday, May 18. Seals 21071 and 21053 were removed from the ballot receptacle and all 370 ballots were rescanned through the DS200. Ballots that were successfully scanned through the DS200, were sealed in a ballot receptacle – seal number 3040.
2. 120 ballots were scanned on DS450 and were unreadable on Wednesday, May 19. Seals 21051 and 21034 were removed from the ballot receptacle and all 120 ballots were rescanned through the DS200. Ballots that were successfully scanned through the DS200, were sealed in a ballot receptacle – seal number 3039.

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3. Ballots that would not scan through either the DS450 or DS200 on Thursday, May 20, will be recreated. Ballots were sealed in a ballot receptacle - seal number 3038.

The Board reviewed issue ballots from ballot receptacles, including improperly marked envelopes; secrecy envelopes cannot have identifying characteristics, and naked ballots; ballots must be in a secrecy envelope to be counted. Issue ballots that were approved by the Board and need scanned through the DS200 were sealed in a ballot receptacle - seal number 5841.

The Board agreed that ballots received after the Tuesday, May 18, 8:00 PM deadline will not be counted.

B. Canvass and tabulate Military/Civilian Overseas ballots

The Board opened and reviewed five military/civilian overseas ballots. Ballots were scanned through the DS200 and counted.

C. Canvass and tabulate In-Person Election Day ballots

The Board reviewed the Numbered List of Voters and Election Night Reports for each precinct.

IV. SUMMARIZATION

Commissioner Dershem stated that less than 100 unscannable mail-in/civilian absentee ballots need to be recreated and scanned, 60 provisional ballots, and military/civilian overseas ballots received by Tuesday, May 25, by 5:00 PM deadline, remain to canvass and tabulate.

Commissioner Dershem asked Jodi to explain the write-in vote process.

Jodi explained what is required is to compare the results for eligible write-in candidates and then determine if they've met the minimum requirement, which is ten names in the same variation, from the same party. If it is deemed that they received the highest number of votes, the candidate is then mailed a letter stating that they won this party's nomination for this position, do they wish to accept or decline, and return the letter by the deadline before they are declared the party's nomination. With 88 different precincts and all the different positions where there are no candidates, each position is looked at individually in every precinct, so it is a tedious process to go through.

To be a write-in winner you must receive the minimum number of write-in votes an individual circulating a petition would need to get. If there are multiple people on the ballot and you are doing a write-in campaign, maybe it's a vote for three and there are only two candidates on the ballot, if multiple people are doing a write-in for this seat you have to get the minimum of 10 and be among one of them who received the higher number of votes. For example, if you were running for District Attorney with a write-in campaign, you would need 250 write-ins and have received the highest number of votes.

Commissioner Dershem asked Jodi to explain the cumulation of write-in name variations.

Jodi explained that the Elections Office does not notify the candidates that they don't have enough write-ins in this name variation. If a candidate would call in and say, "I ran a write-in campaign and I don't have enough in one variation, what do I do or how many did I get?" This can be reviewed once the initial process is done to deem where there are legitimate write-in winners. If there are enough cumulative variation, they will receive a copy of all the

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variations of their names that were submitted. They would have to petition the courts to have the judge accumulate those names and the judge would rule that all of these are indeed the same person.

Commissioner Dershem stated that the write-in name variations must be absolutely close, and the judge will have to accumulate all the name variations to get the number of write-ins needed.

Commissioner Pipe stated that there were 500 - 600 different positions on the ballot this year. Write-ins on each of these races must be reviewed individually.

Commissioner Pipe stated for processing of provisional ballots, Elections staff were able to scan everyone who voted on Election Day into the Sure System. Latisha was then able to verify when processing the provisional ballots, that the voter had not already voted.

V. OLD BUSINESS

VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS

VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS - VIRTUAL CHAT

14:52:41 From jennifer moeny : Is public comment over? I had my hand raised and no one called on me

14:55:12 From jennifer moeny : Thank you!

14:55:48 From Michelle Young : yes

15:00:29 From Michelle Young : He is coming across muffled on Zoom

15:00:30 From Brandy Reiter (Sen. Corman) : It is very hard to hear Pipe speaking. Is there way to get a microphone closer to him?

15:00:49 From Carol Gingrich : SPEAK UP! TAKE YOUR MASK OFF SO THAT YOU CAN BE HEARD. PLEASE

15:02:05 From Michelle Young : His comments are meaningless to the Zoom folks. We are only catching a few words at a time.

15:03:05 From jennifer moeny : I worked precinct 47 and we had 200D and 50R ballots

15:05:08 From LISABIER : Steve Dershem serves as the Board of Elections Chair, why isn't he running this meeting?

15:06:33 From Amanda Rummel : So, in those previous elections, were there Constitutional Amendments, to be voted on? Because those first 2 questions, were the only reasons I showed up on Tue. As I'm sure that was true for many!

15:07:10 From Michelle Young : Using the algorithm alone without human logic applied to account for the probably increase in voter turnout for the PA constitutional amendments was amatuerish.

15:08:37 From Jeremie Thompson : 50 ballots in Precinct 47...didn't anyone from the county look at the numbers beforehand. I think almost anyone can look at a precinct like 47 and say 50 ballots is cutting it close.

15:08:51 From jennifer moeny : There is simply no explanation at this point that is good enough to make things ok. Their immediate resignation is the only option at this point. Michael Pipe has proven to be unfit for the job.

15:14:34 From Kara Kavala : All I know is that when you do the right thing you don't have a room full of

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angry people demanding your resignation. If they ran for these positions they needed to know they were going to be held responsible for every aspect of their job. How could it be so difficult to make sure that ballots are available for an election day. If they knew going into it that Republicans have been riled up, they should have known not to make it worse. It can't be that difficult to not want to be yelled at for weeks on end for a mistake that could easily have been remedied.

15:24:35 From LISABIER : If I ran this business they would be fired immediately; we are watching over \$200,000 in salaries at work. It is time for us the electorate (if we can call ourselves that at this point) to demand resignations.

15:27:06 From jennifer moeny : Taking responsibility is also resigning when you have made an error that causes irreparable harm

15:39:37 From jennifer moeny : Do we file with the state attorney general?

15:46:35 From jennifer moeny : Are those documents available as a pdf?

16:12:39 From Kara Kavala : This segment is very educational. Thank you to the community members who are able

to sit in live. If we must move forward with mail in ballots, public education of the mail in process will be key.

VIII. ELECTION ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tuesday, May 25, 2021

Last day for County Board of Elections to receive voted military and overseas absentee ballots (submitted for delivery no later than 11:59 PM on May 17)

Monday, August 2, 2021

Last day to circulate and file nomination papers

Monday, August 9, 2021

Last day to file objections to nomination papers

Monday, August 9, 2021

Last day for withdrawal by candidates nominated by nomination papers

Monday, August 9, 2021

Last day for withdrawal by candidates nominated at the primary

Monday, October 18, 2021

Last day to REGISTER before the November election

Tuesday, Oct 26, 2021

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

Tuesday, November 2, 2021

Last day for County Board of Elections to receive voted mail-in and civilian absentee ballots (must be received by 8:00 PM)

Tuesday, November 2, 2021

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IX. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Commissioner Pipe, seconded by Commissioner Higgins, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 6:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Lora Day
Elections Office
Department 3 Clerk