



## BOARD OF ELECTIONS MINUTES

Tuesday August 1, 2023 3:00 P.M.

Willowbank Office Building

420 Holmes Street, Room 146

Bellefonte, PA 16823

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### I. CALL TO ORDER

The public meeting of the Centre County Board of Elections was convened at 3:04 PM by Chair of the Board Vicki Fong.

In attendance were Board Members Chris Exarchos, Vicki Fong, Administrator John Franek Jr., Director of Elections Beth Lechman, Solicitor Betsy Dupuis, Staff Assistant Lisa Long and Latisha Stefenko.

Guests present included Michelle Schellberg, Thomas King, Thomas Breth and Linda Sheckler.

### II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

### III. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments received from the public.

### IV. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions to the agenda.

### V. MINUTES

The Board will consider approving the minutes from the May 30, 2023 Board of Elections meeting.

*Action: On a motion by Chris Exarchos, seconded by Vicki Fong, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes from May 30, 2023 meeting.*

### VI. NEW BUSINESS

#### A. Petition to strike names received by the Elections Office on July 12, 2023.

Thomas Breth, on behalf of the Petitioner Linda Sheckler, stated that his client is asking that the 350 registered electors registered at the Penn State University dorms, that were closed for renovations, be struck off the poll books. Under the Election code, those residents have an obligation to inform the Borough of Elections to update their addresses. The petition that was filed contains all the efforts that were taken by his client to reach those students who are registered, including letters that were sent out.

Chris Exarchos asked Solicitor Betsy Dupuis about the resolution by the Board of Elections related to the previous petition filed by Ms. Sheckler in 2022.

Betsy Dupuis stated that there was a similar petition filed by Ms. Sheckler last year which was delivered within the 90-day NVRA window. The Board of Elections did not strike the names but asked the Election staff to reach out by mail to those individuals. Ms. Dupuis

stated that in order to physically remove someone from the poll books, the elections personnel has to know that the party has received notice.

Chris Exarchos asked if there is a process that is used to update the addresses of registered voters that graduate from universities. Beth Lechman stated that the elections office is not required to reach out to these students to have them change their address.

Beth Lechman stated that from the list that was given to her (which was attached to the Petition), all but 17 of the 350 registered voters were listed as inactive. The Elections office sent out voter registration cards to the 17 remaining individuals and 13 of the 17 cards were returned undeliverable and those voters were marked inactive in accordance with the NVRA. It will state in the poll book that these individuals are inactive, and they will have to affirm their address, via affidavit, when they go to vote in the future.

Beth Lechman stated that last year when the elections office received Ms. Sheckler's first petition it was after 90 days and with the NVRA process you aren't allowed to send out any sort of election mailings inside the 90-day window. In March, the Election staff sent out notices to all the individuals listed in the petition. If the mail is returned, the elections office starts the process to become inactive. After two federal elections, if those individuals are still inactive, the elections office can remove those individuals from rolls.

Vicki Fong asked what happens to the four registered voters that the Elections office hasn't heard back from. Beth Lechman stated that if the elections office does not receive anything from those voters after two federal elections in which those individuals do not participate, those voters then become inactive.

*Action: On a motion by Chris Exarchos, seconded by Vicki Fong, the Board voted unanimously to deny the petition and maintain staff procedures and protocol for updating registration rolls.*

B. Consideration of RFP for delivery of Election equipment

Beth Lechman stated they have been working on creating an RFP to have the election equipment be delivered by a third-party entity for the Fall of 2023, which would allow other staff to be utilized in other areas. This is a one-time proposal, with the potential of using the successful bidder in future elections.

Chris Exarchos asked who would be moving the equipment and how does the elections office maintain the integrity of the equipment. Beth Lechman stated that it usually is moving companies that bid on such jobs. The equipment would have security seals and barcodes that can be scanned. Each piece of equipment would be scanned when they are delivered to the polling locations.

Betsy Dupuis stated the RFP reviewing committee would look closely at the prospective contractors' integrity as well as vetting the contractors to make sure that each has the capacity and experience to do the work.

Chris Exarchos asked if there were any statutes on chain of custody for voting equipment. Betsy Dupuis said there is no specific statutory language but the elections office has established chains of custody for the handling of equipment and voting material.

Chris Exarchos suggested the elections office hire more people or consider having the sheriff's deputies help out.

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Administrator John Franek Jr. stated the whole idea would be that a professional moving service that is bonded and insured would be the ones that would be handling the equipment. He thinks that this would be an improvement and make things easier for the elections staff. He suggested that we move forward with the RFP and then it can be stopped at any moment.

Michelle Schellberg asked if they have considered constables to help as well.

Chris Exarchos recommended that if the County would hire a third-party company, the elections staff should require a county employee to ride along to help with the concerns of chain of custody. Beth Lechman noted that the elections staff would add that requirement to the RFP.

*Action: On a motion by Chris Exarchos, seconded by Vicki Fong, the Board voted unanimously to authorize an RFP for Election equipment as long as the County maintains chain of custody with the equipment.*

- VII. OLD BUSINESS
- VIII. ELECTION ANNOUNCEMENTS
- IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION REPORT
- X. QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESS
- XI. ADJOURN

On a motion by Chris Exarchos seconded by Vicki Fong, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:18 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Long  
Staff Assistant