



BOARD OF ELECTIONS MINUTES

Thursday, September 17, 2020, 11:00 A.M.

Virtual - BlueJeans

I. CALL TO ORDER

The public meeting of the Centre County Board of Elections was convened at 11:21 AM by Chair of the Board of Elections, Commissioner Steven Dershem.

In attendance were Commissioner Michael Pipe, Commissioner Mark Higgins, Commissioner Steven Dershem, Administrator Margaret Gray, Elections Coordinator Jodi Nedd, Voter Registration Latisha Stefanko, Executive Office Supervisor Natalie Smith and Solicitor Elizabeth Dupuis.

County personnel present included Jason Moser,

Guests present included 12408053253, 16103606166, 18143600850, 18143607731, 18145743104, 18145745714, 18145779842, 18146927941, 18148803201, 18649670210, 19196193884, Anita Thies, Betsy Whitman, Brad, Carl Evensen, Carol, Carol, Cheryl Johnson, Claudia Wilson, Daryl, David Lomison, Debra Tack, Delores Gibney, Elizabeth Hutton, Greg Stewart, Guest, guest, Guest 19, James Dunne, Jim Gallo, Jody, Kelly, Kris, Kris Eng, Laura Shadle, Linda White, Lisa, Mark Johnson, MRH, Nancy Chiswick, Nick Thompson, Paul Hallacher, Paul Hay, Peggy Jackson, Nancy Perkins, Phyllis Gallo, Robert Potter, Steven, Susan Rogacs, Taylor Lake, Terry Martin, Tom Holleran, and Vicki Fong.

Representatives from the news media included Evan Hinkley, Geoff Rushton, and Marley Parish.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments received from the public.

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 Tuesday, September 15.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

V. OLD BUSINESS

A. Ballot Certification and Printing Update

Commissioner Pipe reported that ballots cannot be printed until the court case regarding the Presidential status for the Green Party is resolved.

B. Center for Tech and Civic Life Grant Plan Update

The Board of Elections submitted a grant application to the Centre for Tech and Civic Life. The organization received a donation from Mark Zuckerberg and Priscilla Chan in the amount of \$250,000,000 to provide grants to provide grants to local election jurisdictions across the country to help ensure every voter can participate in the November election. The County's grant application in excess of \$860,000 will cover costs due to the pandemic, preserve in person voting options, purchase drop boxes and offer hazard pay for poll workers. Commissioner Pipe hopes to receive notice of the grant award by the end of the week.

C. Polling Location Eligibility Review

There are three precincts that were used as temporary polling locations for the Primary. They may need to be used again in November. The Board will take action on these locations at a future meeting.

D. Change of Polling Location

On a motion by Commissioner Pipe, seconded by Commissioner Higgins, the Board voted unanimously to approve items i-ii.

- i. Precinct 56 Harris East from the Zion Lutheran Church, 105 Old Boalsburg Road, Boalsburg to Calvary Fields, 150 Harvest Fields, Drive, Boalsburg.
- ii. Precinct 18 from the Weston Center to the HUB-Robeson Center

E. Drop Box Policy

On September 1, Commissioner Pipe presented to the Board of Elections the Centre County Ballot Return and Collection Plan for the 2020 General Election. Reviewing the Plan, Commissioner Pipe explained that the Pennsylvania Department of State provided guidance on August 19 stipulating how counties can use secure ballot return receptacles (drop boxes). The County must submit to the Department of State an initial ballot return collection plan no later than September 19, 2020.

The plan establishes a ballot return and collection plan, ballot return site design and requirements, ballot collection and chain of custody procedures, and processing of collected ballots. For the 2020 General Election, the Board of Elections looks to achieve four main objectives:

- Afford voters greater access to returning their own voted absentee ballots and mail-in ballots.
- Decrease the wait time for in-person voting on Tuesday, November 3, 2020
- Provide voters another safe option for voting during COVID-19.
- Allay concerns regarding potential delays with the United States Postal Service.

The Board has identified eight locations for potential drop boxes. The receptacles will be located at the Willowbank Building, Patton Township Municipal Building, State College Borough Building, Spring Township Municipal Building, Magisterial District Office 49-3-03, Magisterial District Office 49-3-04, and the HUB Robeson Center. The

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Board will provide notice on the County website and made available at the Willowbank Building.

Commissioner Pipe also reviewed security and authorized access to ballots inside of the drop box. Only authorized election officials designated by the Board of Elections will access the keys of the lock. There will be video security surveillance at each site with record retention through January 21, 2021. Commissioner Pipe also reviewed ballot collection and chain of custody procedures outlined in the draft plan.

Following submission to the Department of State, the plan will be reviewed and certified. The County can then begin to utilize the drop boxes.

Commissioner Dershem expressed his concern for the judicial review and lawsuits related to drop boxes. As this is currently under legislative review, he feels this opens the door for many legal challenges. He strongly suggested that the Board does not move forward at this time and he does not support the efforts at this point. If the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania would rule that drop boxes are not covered by Act 7 of 2019, Commissioner Pipe will not support their use. As of August 19, the Department of State says that they are covered under the Act.

Commissioner Pipe made a motion that by close of business on Friday, September 18, the Board of Elections transmit to the Bureau of Elections Security and Technology at the Pennsylvania Department of State, Centre County's Ballot Return and Collection Plan for the 2020 General Election. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Higgins.

Commissioner Dershem opened the floor for public comment.

The Board received public comment from Gregg Stewart, Anita Thies of Patton Township, Evan Myers (Guest 19) of State College Borough Council, Kris Eng of Ferguson Township, Claudia Wilson, Vicki Fong, Betsy Whitman of Patton Township,

Commissioner Pipe responded to questions and comments submitted in the virtual meeting chat.

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ClaudiaWilson 11:09 AM

I have joined the meeting but cannot understand anything that is being said. Has this meeting started yet?

VickiFong 11:10 AM

I don't see the commissioners yet. There was a 10 am mtg.

11:10 AM Me

The meeting will begin momentarily. The Board of Commissioners meeting has just adjourned.

Guest 11:11 AM

Chad Higgins is in the BOC link not this one

VickiFong 11:13 AM

I am not hearing the audio of Commissioner Pipe.

Carol 11:15 AM

Thank you for the explanation Mike.

Carol 11:15 AM

Thank you for the explanation Mike.

DeloresGibney 11:21 AM

I hear someone commenting about someone from SC, I have moved back to my childhood home in case you are wondering.

tisha 11:35 AM

Natalie. we called the new number. How do we unmute if necessary?

11:37 AM Me

https://www.centrecountypa.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/_09172020-860

11:38 AM Me

Please use the link above to access the meeting agenda and Ballot Return and Collection Plan for the 2020 General Election.

DebraTack 11:53 AM

I can appreciate all the "safety"

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DebraTack 11:53 AM

I can appreciate all the "safety" measures. BUT I still don't trust mail in ballots. Why would the box be available before Nov. 3??? If someone cannot vote on Nov. 3, they should do Absentee ballot.

Kris Eng 11:54 AM

Why all this when they can just mail in their ballot?

Terry Martin 11:54 AM

Absentee ballot and in person should be promoted

Kris Eng 11:55 AM

How is all this going to be done in little a month? What is your training plan and timeline?

Terry Martin 11:55 AM

what is the cost to us tax payers for this elaborate plan?

Kris Eng 11:56 AM

Why right now?

Kris Eng 11:56 AM

Why right now?

Why the rush?

DebraTack 11:56 AM

What is the punishment for voting twice or illegally? I hope it is severe.

Kris Eng 11:57 AM

Why are we doing this?

DebraTack 11:57 AM

I agree. Sounds sooo expensive

Kris Eng 11:57 AM

Can you review the remote mailing at BJC?

Kris 11:57 AM

This is costing a fortune and it is so at risk of voter fraud. It is very hard to id a suspect on camera especially if they wear a mask! I cant believe these ballot boxes will be OUTSIDE!!

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Carol 11:57 AM

Question: How will ballot verification be completed by the 11/3 final count?

Kris 11:58 AM

How can you combat counterfeit ballots? Is there any watermark ?!

Kris Eng 11:58 AM

We also want to protect each person's vote.

Greg Stewart 11:58 AM

great plan

Kris 11:59 AM

I am for democracy too! Go vote in person to insure the sanctity of our election! It will take forever to count them manually. Plus now Wolf won't even allow signature comparisons?!

Kris Eng 11:59 AM

I completely agree Steve. Why the rush?

Kris 12:00 PM

Thank you Steve! The voice of reason!

TaylorLake 12:00 PM

I vote yes!

Greg Stewart 12:01 PM

We need safe voting options for all voters This covers all regions in Centre

Kris Eng 12:01 PM

Regardless of the law, this is not practical in this limited timeframe

Kris 12:01 PM

NO to tainting our election process!

DebraTack 12:01 PM

I vote no to mail in. I vote Yes to absentee

Jody 12:01 PM

Yes Mark can roll his eyes but most of us agree with you Steve

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Kris 12:01 PM

Its robust with voter fraud potential!

ClaudiaWilson 12:01 PM

I heartily agree to be prepared to make drop boxes available in as many locations in Centre County. We should move forward until there is a ruling.

Kris Eng 12:02 PM

yes!!!! So complicated on a very complicated process already

Guest 19 12:02 PM

As a 50+ year resident of Centre County and as a Borough Council member in State College representing our residents I strongly support this plan. A robust democracy depends on the full participation of as many citizens as possible. This ensure this is a safe and legal way.

Kris 12:02 PM

Move forward with this much community objection?!

Table it!

Elizabeth Hutton 12:02 PM

I strongly support this robust and sensible plan to include as many people who want to vote using ballot boxes.

Kris Eng 12:03 PM

Why now? Why these changes during such a critical presidential election?

TaylorLake 12:03 PM

Why now? Pandemic

Kris Eng 12:03 PM

Table it until the next election cycle

Terry Martin 12:03 PM

It seems rushed, expensive, unnecessary, especially the item about ballots sticking to walls and on floors.

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Guest 19 12:03 PM

Above comments that there should be absentee ballots but not mail in is at odds - people mail in their absentee ballots.

Kris Eng 12:03 PM

And take time for general public comment just on this topic.

Kris 12:03 PM

This plan is horrible, costing us a fortune and leaves the sanctity of our election at great risk, but of course thats what the Democrats want!

Carol 12:04 PM

Question from Carol King, State College Borough: How will ballot verification be completed by the 11/3 final count?

Terry Martin 12:04 PM

both mail in and absentee are supported

Kris Eng 12:04 PM

They have access through the USPC

ClaudiaWilson 12:05 PM

I would like to make a comment.

PeggyJackson 12:05 PM

Thank you for a thorough explanation of the drop box procedures. It is reassuring to have a safe alternative to In-person voting (Just as businesses offer delivery & pickup options for covid-19 precautions). Because of possible mail delays, this is also reassuring that our ballot will arrive by 11/3.

DebraTack 12:05 PM

Absentee have a deadline. Need work. Easy for all and have been used for years Absentee is very different than these new "mail in". And yes absentee are mailed. Of course

AnitaThies 12:05 PM

I would like to comment

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Jody 12:06 PM

being this plan is rushed and expensive and mailing traditionally has worked just fine, this lends to a suspicion of this plan

Guest 19 12:06 PM

Why change - because of COVID and the whole history of the nation is ever expanding voting rights. When the Constitution was adopted only white land owning males could vote - that has changed as it should so that women, non land owners and people of color can vote now.

Greg Stewart 12:06 PM

mail in ballots and absentee are the same under PA law

Kris Eng 12:06 PM

Why would we implement a plan that is already under scrutiny?

Greg Stewart 12:07 PM

There is no legal difference between mail ballot and absentee

Jen Wagner 12:07 PM

Jen Wagner, Harris West (Boalsburg). I strongly support the plan presented. Given the urgency for preparation to move forward, I think a delay would be unwise and further complicate the ability for ALL voters to have access to participate in the election.

ClaudiaWilson 12:07 PM

I used the drop box during primary election because I was working the polls. I felt it was safe and secure and allowed me to vote without trouble. I felt it was secure.

Kris 12:09 PM

\$50,000!!! That CARES money should have gone to the businesses to help them!!!!

MarleyParish 12:09 PM

I have a question.

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AnitaThies 12:09 PM

As a 44 year resident of Centre County and someone who has been a poll worker I support having these drop boxes. As to this requiring complicated training, the same could be said about training of poll workers and this has always been done very clearly and professionally and the importance of conducting elections in the best possible way requires it.

DebraTack 12:09 PM

the Centre for Tech and Civic Life is not bi-partisan. Just look at who gives them money. Centre County should NOT accept money from them. It is easy to research that company

Jody 12:09 PM

the whole mail-in push is dubious, especially with Zukerburg investing given his censureship of conservatives on Facebook

Paul Hallacher 12:09 PM

I strongly support the plan for drop boxes.

Paul Hallacher 12:09 PM

I strongly support the plan for drop boxes.

Kris 12:10 PM

ZUCKERBERG is a puppet controlled by George Soros! A DNC puppet. Unbelievable

Kris Eng 12:10 PM

Can you review the voting place that will be at the BJC

Jen Wagner 12:10 PM

As a local attorney, I would also add that it makes sense for preparations to move forward based on the current lawfulness (as per guidance issued). If something were to change (due to litigation outcome or legislation), the plans could be revised at that time.

Betsy Whitman 12:10 PM

Will the sheriff deputies work in bi-partisan pairs?

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Terry Martin 12:10 PM

Why are the Zuckerberg's interested in paying for elections and placing cash in Centre County?

Kris 12:10 PM

I STRONGLY OPPOSE this! We need to sue if they do this!

Jody 12:11 PM

agreed Kris

this smells of cheating big time

Kris 12:11 PM

The county commissioners supporting this need to be VOTED OUT!

Are you checking the barcodes as they come in? You aren't even checking voter signatures!!

Kris Eng 12:13 PM

Would you please table this until the next election cycle? Can we run this experiment when there we are not in the middle of a presidential election?

Lisa 12:13 PM

I've seen people showing ballot envelopes that are marked D&R on the outside of the envelope. Will Centre County ballot envelopes have this?

DebraTack 12:14 PM

this needs to be told to more people and possibly used at a future election

Terry Martin 12:14 PM

Why are our commissioners spending so much time and cash to control the election process right now?

Kris Eng 12:14 PM

Since the misuse of remote ballot boxes has been a problem in the past, why would we want to enter into this during a presidential election?

Kris 12:14 PM

Michael Pipe you are a horrible liar. Please stop. There is no way to stop ballot stuffing. You aren't checking barcodes, there is no watermark, and Wolf already said you aren't checking even the signature !

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Robert Potter 12:14 PM

I strongly support this well-thought plan. We all should support every effort to encourage more voting and safe voting. This does both.

Daryl 12:14 PM

I understand ballots will not be excluded for non-matching signatures. Is that correct?

VickiFong 12:14 PM

There are some people who want to comment. Can you call on them?

PeggyJackson 12:15 PM

This is a very secure process, and is actually more secure than in-person voting. Where is the proof that it is cheating or able to be forged?

DebraTack 12:15 PM

what is the other part?

Kris 12:15 PM

Please table this for more discussion!

Guest 19 12:15 PM

I have noticed that just about everyone here has been respectful and has not participated in political attacks - thank you. For those that continue to defame others that is not a reasoned argument it's simply namecalling and does not advance the discussion.

Kris Eng 12:16 PM

It just seems every time you move a ballot there is a possibility for fraud.

VickiFong 12:16 PM

Anita Thies and Claudia Wilson would like to comment. Can you allow?

PeggyJackson 12:16 PM

Please don't table this & cause further delays to safe, fair voting.

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Terry Martin 12:17 PM

When will the sample ballots be available?

Kris 12:17 PM

You cannot rush such a serious matter that affects every voter. Security is greatly flawed and needs more discussion.

Kris Eng 12:17 PM

And Colorado spent years perfecting their mail in ballot system

Betsy Whitman 12:17 PM

I strongly support this voting process with drop boxes and a remote vote-in-person options. Thanks to all three commissioners for the work you have invested in this.

Paul Hallacher 12:18 PM

There seems to be a lot of concern about voter fraud. Is there a history of voter fraud in Centre County?

PeggyJackson 12:18 PM

If our signature has changed over the years. how can we be sure that our signature is OK.

Kris Eng 12:18 PM

I strongly disagree with moving forward with a system that is only on paper and has never been tried to work our errors. Please take more time to do this on a primary process.

Why are we implementing an experiment on a highly contested presidential election?

Kris 12:19 PM

Voters from both sides will be unable to accept the results of this type of mail in election. There will be lawsuits and tons of liability here.

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Jody 12:20 PM

this system will enhance voter fraud and the PA Secretary of State has chronically avoided answering critical questions about mail-in voting

Kris 12:23 PM

Exactly DebraTack

Kris 12:22 PM

If someone threw a rope around a ballot box and dragged it away they would not be identified on camera especially if wearing a mask. Im a retired cop and we rarely got a good id from surveillance footage WITHOUT a mask.

VickiFong 12:24 PM

The commissioners showed great leadership in updating our voting machines to protect against hacking. With the advent of COVID, I support this well-thought out strategic plan to protect voters and voting ballots. These times of crises and challenges require innovative thinking and integrity.

DebraTack 12:23 PM

By then, it will be too late - the criminal will have dropped in 10 ballots and gotten away with it. No masks is essential

PeggyJackson 12:24 PM

Exactly, VickFong

Lisa 12:23 PM

I agree with Kris, how would that situation be handled?

Lisa 12:24 PM

If someone drops off multiple votes and I report it... how do you know specifically how many and which votes they dropped?

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VickiFong 12:25 PM

I have voted using absentee and mail-in ballots. There is little difference, except for questions on medical conditions or work travel.

Kris 12:25 PM

In person voting has multiple election workers watching the locked box the whole time until it is delivered to the county seat! The ballot box is never left unattended!

DebraTack 12:25 PM

How will you avoid double voting. I can drop my ballot in a box and then go to my voting place. I won't do that, but someone will easily figure that out. How will that be handled?

VickiFong 12:26 PM

The primary drop off box was secure. Did the sheriff's office detect fraudulent activity?

VickiFong 12:26 PM

The primary drop off box was secure. Did the sheriff's office detect fraudulent activity?

TaylorLake 12:27 PM

There is your answer Debra

Kris 12:27 PM

VickiFong - absentee balloting is different. You request that ballot due to you not being present in person in the state or if you are immobile. If you can go to the grocery store then you can go to a voter precinct to keep voter fraud potential low.

VickiFong 12:28 PM

Mail-in ballot is legal.

Kris 12:28 PM

VickiFong - how can you answer there was no voter fraud if NO ONE WAS LOOKING FOR IT

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TaylorLake 12:31 PM

Ok, let me get this straight. There is no data that voter fraud has taken place. So you want data to show that voter fraud hasn't taken place?

TaylorLake 12:31 PM

Ok, let me get this straight. There is no data that voter fraud has taken place. So you want data to show that voter fraud hasn't taken place?

DebraTack 12:34 PM

I live in the borough. And I do not agree with these drop box.

DebraTack 12:34 PM

I live in the borough. And I do not agree with these drop box.

Guest 19 12:35 PM

Noted

Guest 19 12:35 PM

Noted

Elizabeth Hutton 12:36 PM

I live in the borough and I do agree with these drop boxes.

Elizabeth Hutton 12:36 PM

I live in the borough and I do agree with these drop boxes.

Paul Hallacher 12:37 PM

I live in the Borough and I also do agree with these drop boxes.

Paul Hallacher 12:37 PM

I live in the Borough and I also do agree with these drop boxes.

Betsy Whitman 12:39 PM

I would like to make a comment.

Betsy Whitman 12:39 PM

I would like to make a comment.

Jen Wagner 12:50 PM

After all of the information presented thus far, I fully support the carefully crafted plan under consideration.

Brad 12:50 PM

Got it--thank you. Sounds even more transparent, based on your description.

Michael Pipe 1:02 PM

Thanks for everyone's thoughts and perspectives!

Commissioner Dershem opened the floor for questions from the press.

The Board received questions from Marley Parish and Evan Hinkley.

Commissioner Pipe announced that during today's Board of Election Meeting, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court made a ruling on drop boxes. Solicitor Elizabeth Dupuis confirmed that the Supreme Court has ruled drop boxes are permitted as approved by election boards, naked ballots will not be counted, poll worker requirements are Constitutional, the Court accepted the request to count ballots that are mailed on or before 8 PM on Election Day and received by the Board of Election by November 6; the County will not have to notify voters of rejected ballots. She read from the Court's opinion, "This Court declares that the Election Code permits County Boards of Election to accept hand delivered mail in ballots at locations other than their office addresses including drop boxes." Solicitor Dupuis will distribute the ruling and opinion to the Board.

VI. DISCUSSION ITEMS

VII. ELECTION ANNOUNCEMENTS

Monday, October 19, 2020

Last day to REGISTER before the November election.

Tuesday, October 27, 2020

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

IV. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Commissioner Pipe, seconded by Commissioner Higgins, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 1:09 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Natalie Smith
Executive Office Supervisor