

MINUTES

City of Charlottesville Electoral Board Meeting of September 5, 2018

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 5:49 pm on Wednesday, September 5, 2018 in the office of the Charlottesville General Registrar. Those present were Electoral Board members Anne Hemenway (Chair), Jon Bright (Vice Chair), and Jim Nix (Secretary), General Registrar Rosanna Bencoach, Deputy Registrar Katie Mauller, Election Manager Melissa Morton, Project Assistants (Assistant Registrars) Joyce McKenney and Paul Boggs and Voter Equipment Technician Raenell Lockley.

On a motion by the Chair, seconded by the Vice Chair, the agenda was approved unanimously without change.

Public Comment

There were no members of the public present at this meeting.

Planning for the November 6 Election

The sole agenda item for this meeting was detailed election preparation. This meeting was necessitated by the announcement of a pending prolonged absence by an experienced senior staff member. During the meeting, two other staff members announced that they may have to incur additional absences this fall. In preparation for the meeting the Secretary prepared and distributed a list of questions concerning election preparation and decisions yet to be made regarding the election. The General Registrar, with input from the staff, prepared responses to the questions for discussion at the meeting.

In opening the discussion, the Chair, stressed to the referenced senior staff member that this person's well-being is primary and that this meeting was scheduled to ensure that there is a plan to cover key election duties during the expected absence.

The discussion then followed the sequence of items in the paper prepared by the Secretary and modified by the staff. Training issues were discussed first and all agreed that it is essential that all election officials are made familiar with the set up and use of the Touch Writer. In the interest of simplifying the training, the plan to print provisional ballots, as required, in the precincts on Election Day, using the Touch Writers, was scrapped in favor of a return to the standard policy of printing a small quantity of these ballots in advance and distributing them to the precincts along with the regular ballots. Printing from the Touch Writer would still be available for backup.

The training of new, first time election officials is scheduled for Saturday, October 13 and the staff requested that one Board member be present to assist Ms. McKenney and Ms. Lockley with this training.

Ms. McKenney has been working on a complete revision of the election officer (EO) checklist but the additional responsibilities falling to her with the absence of a senior staff member, combined with other possible absences referenced earlier in the meeting, will make it impossible for her to complete this task before the election. The Board will advise the EOs at training that the new checklist is still a work in progress. Existing materials will be used at this election.

The Board and the General Registrar have agreed to changes in office procedures on election night that affect the chiefs as they return election materials to the office. Under the new procedures, the Board and the Clerk of Court will deal with each precinct, one at a time, as they arrive. This will be done in the conference room at the rear of the office while other arriving chiefs remain in the front of the office until called. This will be covered in the chief's training on October 17.

Other issues resolved at this meeting included the schedule of ballot printing in the office and the method of packaging the ballots for issue to the precincts.

The Election Manager announced that a seasonal voter equipment technician, Bob Hodous, has been hired and will be available almost immediately to assist with preparation of the poll books and voting machines, logic and accuracy testing, equipment training for election officials, equipment set up in the precincts, etc. Mr. Hodous, as a former member of the Electoral Board and a former election official, brings a wealth of experience to this position.

In another effort to simplify the preparation for this election, a decision was made to eliminate the use of land-line precinct phones and ask the chief election officials to communicate with the office by means of their personal cell phones.

With a senior staff member away possibly through Election Day, Ms. McKenney will be the primary point of contact for all issues regarding election officials and other matters that are normally handled by the absent senior staff member. The Board members made it clear, however, that Ms. McKenney would not be expected to perform all of that senior staff person's tasks as well as her own and that others would be assisting her, including the General Registrar and the Deputy Registrar.

With the referenced key senior staff member possibly unavailable on Election Day, the Board strongly recommended to the General Registrar that orders be placed for support on Election Day from both Hart Intercivic (voting equipment) and VR Systems (poll books).

In other business, the Deputy Registrar announced that an offer has been made to fill a vacant Project Assistant (Assistant Registrar) position. This position is especially key during processing of mail absentee ballots.

Next meeting

The next meeting will take place in the office of the Charlottesville General Registrar at noon on Friday, September 14, 2018 in conjunction with public Logic and Accuracy testing in preparation for the start of absentee voting.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

James Nix, Secretary

Anne Hemenway, Chair

Jon Bright, Vice Chair