

MINUTES

City of Charlottesville Electoral Board Meeting of March 12, 2019

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 5:50 pm on Tuesday, March 12, 2019 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 and Election Manager Melissa Morton.

On a motion by the Chair, seconded by the Vice Chair, the agenda was approved unanimously as amended by deleting the final three discussion items regarding the appointment of a new General Registrar with the exception that we would discuss the time-line for reviewing applications and preparing for interviews.

On a motion by the Chair, seconded by the Vice Chair, the minutes of the February 5, 2019 meeting were approved unanimously without change.

On a motion by the Chair, seconded by the Vice Chair, the minutes of the March 4, 2019 meeting were approved unanimously with a single change: postponing the review of the General Registrar's job description to a future, rather than the next, meeting.

Public Comment

No members of the public were present for this meeting.

Updates from the Annual VEBA Meeting

The Vice Chair, Secretary and the Election Manager provided a brief summary of meetings they participated in at the Virginia Electoral Boards Association (VEBA) meeting. Of particular interest were several changes to the law that await signature by the Governor including the introduction of no-excuse absentee voting in the fall of 2020, additional requirements for those who conduct voter registration drives, and changes to the procedures for removing General Registrars and Electoral Board members.

The Vice Chair reported on his discussion with a vendor of software designed to maintain an inventory of all voting equipment including minor items like signs as well as the major voting equipment components. The Election Manager added that there are additional options for such systems available from other vendors. The Board members agreed that employment of such software would be useful and cost effective.

The attendees also reported on discussions with a representative of Hart Intercivic concerning ballot printing issues (see discussion below) and with a representative of VR

Systems regarding a new tablet-based electronic pollbook (EPB) to replace the aging lap-top computer EPBs we currently use. The new EPBs are faster and much easier to use than our current equipment and offer quick scanning of driver's licenses for error-free check in of voters. They are expected to receive certification by the Department of Elections in June and will be available for purchase shortly thereafter. A capital improvement project (CIP) budget request for purchase of these new EPBs will be submitted in August for the 2020-2021 fiscal year so that they can be on hand for the 2020 presidential general election if funds are provided by the City.

Ballot Printing In-House

The experience with ballot printing for the November 2018 general election demonstrated that the flexibility and cost savings realized with in-house ballot printing comes with serious challenges. The Chair stressed that these challenges must be fully addressed in order to continue the practice of in-house printing. Following a discussion of the specifics the Board members agreed to continue printing ballots using the office printer provided the following conditions are met:

That ballot printing will only be done when the office is closed in order to avoid interference with other election preparation activities.

That paper purchased for printing ballots will comply with all of the requirements specified by Hart Intercivic, the manufacturer of our voting equipment, and that the ballot paper will be stored separately from other paper supplies in the office.

That the ballot scanners will undergo full functionality testing, using the in-house printed ballots, prior to each election.

And that the printer used for this purpose will be certified to print ballots.

The Board members were in full agreement on all of these points. However, the Election Manager pointed out that the certification of the ballot printer could not be completed in time to print the ballots for the June 11 primary. The issues of in-house printing and ballot scanner functionality testing were discussed at length with a Hart representative at the VEBA annual meeting. Based on these discussions, and other considerations, the Board members decided to proceed with in-house printing for the June primary providing that all of the requirements listed above, except for the printer certification, are met. The printer certifications would, however, be required prior to printing the General Election ballots.

Status of Candidates for the City Council Primary

Ms. Bencoach provided the Board members with a list of all candidates and known potential candidates for City Council and other local offices, including House of

Delegates. The spreadsheet compiled information on the documents candidates had filed as well as the status of their campaign finance reporting.

The Secretary informed the Board members and staff that five people had filed with the Charlottesville Democratic Committee as candidates for the June 11 primary and that all of them had filed at noon on March 11, the opening day for filing. Assuming that all are confirmed to have submitted a sufficient number of petition signatures at the time of filing, the Board will be required to conduct a random draw to determine ballot order for candidates in this contest.

Status of Voting Equipment

The Election Manager informed the Board concerning options for repair of the high-speed scanner used by the Central Absentee Precinct and the cost of annual warranty coverage for all of the voting equipment. Her recommendation was to continue with the annual warranty contract for all of the voting equipment except for the high-speed scanner, to contract with Hart for the one-time repair of the high speed scanner and in the future rely on in house routine service for that scanner, as is done in another City office with the same model. The Board members agreed with her assessment of the cost effectiveness of these choices.

Appointment of Election Officers

The Election Manager presented a request from an individual wishing to be reappointed as an election officer along with an application from an individual wishing to be appointed as an election official. Both were reviewed by the Board and, on a motion by the Secretary, seconded by the Chair, the one person was reappointed and the following individual was appointed, each to a term of three years as an election officer: Downing Smith.

Voting Equipment Security Plan

The only changes to the 2018 plan proposed by the Election Manager were to the warehouse access list. Her proposal was to remove one staff member from the list who no longer required warehouse access and to add two others whose duties now require access. The Chair moved that these changes be adopted, the Vice Chair seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Preparing for the Appointment of a New General Registrar

There was a brief discussion on the next steps in the process. The Board agreed that the closing date for the job announcement should be April 26. It was also decided that the Board would like to receive the applications as they arrive rather than wait until the closing date to receive all of them. The Secretary was directed to relay these decisions

to the City HR Director. In recognition of the need for the Board to compile and agree on interview questions, jointly review applications to select finalists, and schedule interviews the following meetings were scheduled:

April 17, 2019 to draft questions for the first round of interviews.

May 2, 2019 to determine those to be interviewed and schedule interviews.

Registrar's Report

The General Registrar informed the Board that the appointment of a new Deputy Registrar would be postponed until after July 1 in order to allow the new General Registrar to make the appointment. Jamie Virostko will remain as Acting Deputy Registrar until a new deputy is appointed.

The next meeting of the Board will take place in the office of the Charlottesville General Registrar at 5:45 pm on Wednesday, April 3, 2019 for the purpose of conducting a random draw to determine ballot order for the Democratic Primary for Charlottesville City Council in addition to normal business.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:06 pm.

Respectfully submitted:

James Nix, Secretary

Anne Hemenway, Chair

Jon Bright, Vice Chair