

MINUTES

City of Charlottesville Electoral Board Meeting of November 5-8, 2019

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 5, in the office of the Charlottesville General Registrar. Those present for all or a portion of this meeting were Electoral Board members Anne Hemenway (Chair), Jon Bright (Vice Chair), and Jim Nix (Secretary), Director of Elections and General Registrar Melissa Morton, Deputy Registrar Martin Mash, Assistant Registrar Jamie Virostko, Voter Equipment Technician Bob Hodous and Charlottesville Clerk of Court, Llezelle Dugger. This meeting was convened for the purpose of compiling the results of the November 5 General Election and completing necessary follow-up actions including the canvass of the election to establish the official results, the review of provisional ballots, and the count of provisional ballots approved by the Electoral Board. There was no formal agenda for this meeting.

Public Comment

Mr. Seth Ragosta, an attorney representing the Charlottesville Democratic Committee, was present as an authorized observer for the canvass on Wednesday morning and the start of the count of write-in votes on Wednesday afternoon. He was the only member of the public present for any portion of this meeting and he made no comment but did ask a few questions during the proceedings.

Reporting of Election Results

Beginning shortly after the polls closed at 7:00 p.m., several members of the staff tabulated election results received by telephone from election officers at the nine city precincts. The election results were recorded in the office on worksheets provided by the registrar. The turnout figures and tally of each precinct's results recorded on the worksheets were quickly entered into VERIS, the State's election reporting system, by the General Registrar.

Beginning at approximately 8:00 p.m., the Chief Election Officers from each precinct arrived to turn in election documentation along with the digital memory devices on which the election results and voter turnout data had been recorded. The usual procedure is for the Voter Equipment Technician, Robert Hodous, to download the digital data into the stand-alone computer used to compile election results and then print out complete tallies of election results by precinct. Unfortunately, a computer malfunction made this impossible to do on election night.

The meeting was suspended at 10:15 pm and was resumed at 9:15 a.m. on Wednesday, November 6, 2019.

Canvass of the Election

During the canvass of each precinct, the Statement of Results (SOR) forms were examined to verify that the number of voters reported as checked in and the number of ballots scanned matched the totals on the tapes from the poll books and ballot scanners. The SORs were also examined to verify that the number of ballots scanned was consistent with the number of voters checked in. In addition, the numbers recorded in VERIS on election night were reviewed for accuracy by comparing them with the numbers on the scanner tapes. The Board was prepared to interrupt the canvass at 11:00 a.m. in order to provide an opportunity for provisional voters to address the Board concerning the status of their ballots. However, no provisional voters were present, and the canvass continued. The canvass was concluded at noon. On the SOR for one precinct the number of ballots scanned did not match the number of voters checked in, but this was determined to be due to an error in reporting the number of outside the polls voters. The Chief Election Official for that precinct was summoned and arrived shortly after noon to make the corrections to the SOR. No significant discrepancies were found in the reports from any other precinct and only two minor transcription errors were found in the VERIS reporting; these were quickly corrected by the General Registrar.

Write-in Ballot Count

After pausing for lunch, the meeting was resumed at 1:00 p.m. for the purpose of resolving and tabulating the write-in votes for the Soil and Water Conservation Board. Examination of write-in votes was required because only one candidate had filed and there were two positions to be filled. The data from the digital memory devices, including the captured images of every scanned ballot in each of the precincts, were downloaded into the count computer by Mr. Hodous. Images of the area on each ballot containing write-in votes for this race were then displayed one at a time on the computer screen. The names written on the ballots were read by the Board members and those determined to be valid (living residents of Charlottesville eligible to serve in this position) were compiled as a list of write-in candidates and a vote tabulated each time the name appeared on a ballot. In this manner over 500 ballots were examined over the course of five and a half hours. The Chair was obliged to leave shortly before 4:00 p.m. but the other two Board members remained to complete the process. At the conclusion of the examination of write-in votes the list of candidates exceeded 250 names and the only announced write-in candidate, Mr. Navarre Bartz, was found to have the greatest number of votes (94). The meeting was suspended at 6:30 p.m.

Provisional Ballot Meeting

The Board reconvened at 11:07 on Friday, November 8, 2019 in order to determine the validity of provisional ballots. General Registrar Melissa Morton, Deputy Registrar Martin Mash and Assistant Registrar Jamie Virostko were permitted to remain present for this closed meeting. In addition, Mr. Seth Ragosta was permitted to remain as an authorized observer. As each ballot was considered, Ms. Virostko presented the results of her research into the status of each provisional ballot along with her recommendations, and those of Ms. Morton, for action by the board. Upon completion of the review the Board conducted a series of votes to implement the decisions made in closed session.

Actions Taken on Provisional Ballots

Of the total of 40 provisional ballots 13 were cast by voters who had requested by-mail absentee ballots but did not bring them to the polls. Since no absentee ballots had been received from these voters, their provisional ballots were unanimously approved to be counted on a motion by the Chair, seconded by the Vice Chair.

In addition, 18 provisional ballots were cast by voters without ID at the polls. Of these 11 provided an acceptable ID by the November 8 deadline and were unanimously approved on a motion by the Chair, seconded by the Vice Chair.

Another two provisional ballots cast by voters not found in the poll book were unanimously approved on a motion by the Chair, seconded by the Vice Chair following a determination that one was as a result of a DMV error and the other a VERIS error.

Seven voters who cast ID provisional ballots did not provide ID by the deadline. On a motion by the Chair, seconded by the Vice Chair, these ballots were rejected.

The remaining 7 provisional ballots had been cast by voters not found in the poll book and no evidence could be found to demonstrate an attempt to register in Charlottesville. On a motion by the Chair, seconded by the Vice Chair, these ballots were rejected.

In summary, of the 40 provisional ballots submitted, 26 were accepted and 14 rejected. The approved ballots were then opened and hand counted by the Board members and the tally of provisional ballots was entered into VERIS by the General Registrar.

Conclusion of Canvass

Abstracts of the results of the election were then printed, signed and sealed by the Board members.

The next meeting of the Board will take place in the office of the Charlottesville General Registrar at 5:45 pm on Wednesday December 4, 2019

The meeting was adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

James Nix, Secretary

Anne Hemenway, Chair

Jon Bright, Vice Chair