

MINUTES

City of Charlottesville Electoral Board Meeting of January 7, 2020

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 5:43 p.m. on Tuesday, January 7, 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), Director of Elections and General Registrar Melissa A. Morton, and Deputy Registrar Martin Mash.

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

On a motion by the Chair, seconded by the Vice Chair, the minutes of the December 4, 2019 meeting were unanimously approved without change.

Public Comment

Ms. Sharon Webb, co-chair of the Charlottesville Democratic Committee was present for the meeting but made no comment.

Report of the General Registrar

Ms. Morton reported on the need for additional staff to deal with the increased workload of the Presidential election year. She has submitted a request for a part-time seasonal assistant registrar that is awaiting approval by City Manager. She also expressed a need to fill an unexpected part-time assistant registrar vacancy.

Ms. Morton updated the Board members on the status of the procurement of new electronic pollbooks (EPBs). Capital Improvement Program funds have been allocated for this procurement, but purchase has been delayed by changes in the State certification process. It still appears likely that the new Demtech hardware and Advocate software will be certified in time for the new EPBs to be available for the November general election but not for the March, or possibly even June, primaries. However, Ms. Morton is pursuing the acquisition of the previously certified earlier version of the Advocate software to replace the existing software on our current laptop computer-based EPBs. This can be done with minimal expense in time for the March primary thus enabling the election officials to begin developing familiarity with Advocate software before the upgrade and new hardware become available. The Board is in full support of this decision.

In discussing the introduction of new EPBs Ms. Morton addressed the need for training of all election officials to familiarize them with the new equipment. She emphasized the need for all officers of election to have basic computer skills and to be willing to, and capable of, working at the various stations at the polls. Assistant Chiefs will be assigned specific tasks and responsibilities and Closers will be expected to work as needed during the day at the various workstations. The goal will be to fully prepare all of those working on election day for the heightened scrutiny by voters and the media anticipated during this presidential election year.

Cyber security is a high priority and the Virginia Department of Elections has mandated that all office staff receive additional training in the form of three 90-minute on-line training sessions. Two members of the staff have completed this training and the others are currently in the process.

Appointment of Officers of Election

Mr. Mash presented applications for four individuals wishing to be reappointed as officers of election. The board reviewed the applications and, on a motion by the Chair, seconded by the Vice Chair, the following were unanimously approved for appointment to a three-year term:

Alice Gore
Joan Woodfolk
Janna Gies
Josephine Clark

Office of Election and Electoral Board Policy Approvals

In advance of the meeting the General Registrar had distributed drafts of several policies governing election security and the internal operations of the Registrar's Office. She invited Board comment on the policies related to office operations but asked for formal Board approval on the policies covering election security. In the latter category is the update of a paper covering the policies and procedures governing access to the warehouse in which election equipment is stored. On a motion by the Chair, seconded by the Vice Chair, the changes, which add two staff members to the list approved for access to the warehouse, were approved unanimously.

Ms. Morton asked that the Board members review and comment on the other policy papers at their earliest convenience.

Registrar's Office Budget Update

Ms. Morton reported that the January 7 budget meeting went well with few questions from the panel and she expressed optimism that it would be approved. The Chair and Vice Chair asked several questions concerning the various categories of salary figures in the budget. Those questions were answered but the Board members still find the salary data confusing.

Ballot Printing Issues

The Board members were unanimous in agreeing that the volume of ballots required for the November Presidential general election exceeded our capability for in-house printing. This will require additional funds and the Registrar highlighted the line item in the budget for purchase of November ballots from Hart Intercivic. Ballots for both the March 3 presidential primary and the June 9 regular primary will be printed in-house. For the March 3 primary the Board members agreed with the General Registrar's assessment that we should print 1000 absentee ballots on January 14 and plan for printing 12,000 election ballots in February.

The next meeting of the Board will take place in the office of the Charlottesville General Registrar at 5:45 p.m. on Wednesday, February 5, 2020.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

James Nix, Secretary

Anne Hemenway, Chair

Jon Bright, Vice Chair