

MINUTES

City of Charlottesville Electoral Board Meeting of March 3-6, 2020

The meeting was called to order by the Vice Chair at 8:20 p.m. on Tuesday, March 3, 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 March 3 Presidential Primary 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

No members of the public were present for this meeting

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. Copies of the worksheets were posted in the vestibule of the office for public viewing.

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 Central Absentee Precinct was the last to arrive shortly after 9:00 p.m. As each precinct delivered its documentation, the election results were copied from the memory devices into a stand-alone computer that is a component of the Hart Verity election system.

The meeting was suspended at 10:15 pm and was resumed at 9:10 a.m. on Wednesday, March 4, 2020.

Election of Electoral Board Officers

Upon reconvening the meeting, the Chair reminded the members that, this being the first meeting of the new Board term, it was necessary to elect officers. Following a brief discussion, the Chair moved for the election of the following Board officers for one-year terms beginning on March 1, 2020:

Chair – Anne Hemenway

Vice Chair – Jon Bright

Secretary – Jim Nix

The motion was seconded by the Vice Chair and approved unanimously. The Vice Chair then agreed to sign a letter acknowledging that he has declined to serve either as Chair or as Secretary.

Discussion of the conduct of the election

Before starting the canvass, the three Board members shared observations on the conduct of the election with the General Registrar and the Deputy Registrar. While there were no major problems, several failures were noted that point to a need for improved training, more careful election preparation, better coordination with other city departments and more attention to the setup of polling places and assignment of election officials.

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 approximately noon with no significant discrepancies noted and no changes required to the unofficial election night vote tallies reported in VERIS.

At the conclusion of the canvass the Vice Chair questioned the need to spend time and effort on election night to load the data from the ballot scanners into the computer and print precinct tallies from the compiled data. In the past this has often proven difficult because of technical challenges not easily resolved at the end of a very long and tiring day. The discussion led to the realization that the reports printed from the computer file, while very neat and readable, had no relevance to the reporting of unofficial election-

night results or to the official results that follow from the canvass. Election night reporting is based on vote tallies read from the scanner tapes by the election officials at the precincts and the official results are confirmed by a reading of those same tapes later by the Board members during the canvass. The precinct reports printed from the files downloaded into the computer provide a convenient way to retain and share the election results, but they do not form part of the official record of the election. This realization led to a consensus that the loading of the data into the computer could wait until the day following the election and that Board participation in this process was not required.

Provisional Ballot Meeting

The Board reconvened at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, March 6, 2020 in order to determine the validity of provisional ballots. General Registrar Melissa Morton and Deputy Registrar Martin Mash were permitted to remain present for this closed meeting. As each ballot was considered, Ms. Morton presented the results of research conducted by Ms. Virostko into the status of each provisional ballot along with her recommendations 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 44 provisional ballots 6 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 by 7:00 p.m. on March 3, their provisional ballots were unanimously approved to be counted on a motion by the Chair, seconded by the Vice Chair.

In addition, 11 provisional ballots were cast by voters without ID at the polls. Of these 3 provided an acceptable ID by noon on the March 6 deadline and were unanimously approved on a motion by the Chair, seconded by the Vice Chair.

Eight 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 unanimously rejected.

One voter could not be found in the poll book due to a name change. Following confirmation of the voter's identity, on a motion by the Chair, seconded by the Vice Chair, this ballot was unanimously approved to be counted.

One provisional ballot had been cast because the pollbook showed the voter as having already voted. The voter's address was confirmed and no voter with a similar name

was found in the registration file. On a motion by the Chair, seconded by the Vice Chair, this ballot was unanimously rejected.

The remaining 25 provisional ballots had been cast by voters not found in the poll book. Three had been found to have registered after the close of books, 4 had changed their registration at the DMV and 2 were found to be registered in another precinct. For the remaining 16, 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 25 ballots were unanimously rejected.

In summary, of the 44 provisional ballots submitted, 10 were accepted and 34 rejected. The approved ballots were then opened and hand counted by the Board members, a paper Provisional Precinct pollbook and statement of results were prepared 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 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 18, 2020.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

James Nix, Secretary

Anne Hemenway, Chair

Jon Bright, Vice Chair