

MINUTES

City of Charlottesville Electoral Board Meeting of April 7, 2020

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 7. In order to comply with State and local restrictions on assembly imposed due to the coronavirus threat this meeting was held via video conference. Technical limitations of the system and varying levels of connectivity by participants significantly compromised the discussions among the Board members and the staff and limited the scope of issues covered. 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, Deputy Registrar Martin Mash and Voter Registration Manager Jamie Virostko.

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

Public Comment

Several members of the public joined the video conference as observers. None made any comments but several questions, posed in text messages, were answered by the participants.

Report of the General Registrar

Melissa A. Morton reported that Dan Moy has been appointed as the new Chair of the Republican Party.

Appointment of Officers of Election

Prior to the meeting Mr. Mash had emailed to the board members PDF copies of applications for seven individuals wishing to be appointed as officers of election. The Board reviewed the applications. The Secretary expressed reservations about one of the applicants who had not answered the question regarding prior employment and volunteer activities. Mr. Mash offered to contact the applicant to request additional information. The Chair then moved to appoint the other six applicants. The Vice Chair seconded and, on a unanimous vote the following were appointed to a three-year term:

Diane Marie Badar
Jennifer DeBell
Shelia Marie Eubanks
Alicia Lee

Suzanne Michaels
Phillip McKalips

Update on Preparation for Absentee Voting

Absent alternative guidance from the Department of Elections, preparations continue for the start of absentee voting for the June 9* primary according to the standard plan and schedule. The ballot has not yet been submitted to the State for approval. Ms. Morton informed the Board that the ballot will soon be ready for Board review prior to submission. The next major step will be Logic and Accuracy (L&A) testing of the scanners and ballot marking devices to be used for absentee in-person voting. Absentee in-person voting is scheduled to begin on Friday, April 24**. The Secretary expressed concern that L&A be conducted with the minimum number of personnel present. All possible measures must be taken to minimize the risk of contagion. L&A testing is schedule to be performed in the office of the General Registrar at noon on Monday, April 20^.

Ballot printing will be done in the office by the Secretary and one or two of the staff some time during the week of April 20. All agreed that projecting the number of absentee ballots needed for this primary will be extremely difficult. The Board agreed that voters concerned with virus contagion risks on June 9* should be encouraged to use reason code 2A to vote absentee, whether by mail (preferred) or in-person.

The Charlottesville Public Affairs Office has offered the Board an opportunity to inform the community on issues related to the June primary on a TV program to be broadcast before the start of absentee voting. The Secretary was assigned to participate in this program and will prepare discussion points in coordination with the other Board members, the General Registrar and staff.

Other Issues Related to the June 9 Primary

The Chair inquired about the availability of the Carver and Key Recreation Centers for use as polling places on June 9*. Ms. Morton responded that, at this time, there were no known issues and voting will take place at all regular precincts. Masks and gloves will be available for Officers of Election at every polling location. Ample supplies of hand sanitizer will be available to both Election Officers and the general public. The precinct layouts will be modified to comply with CDC guidelines regarding recommended physical spacing to control the contagion of COVID-19.

Space limitations are the most severe at the Tonsler precinct. Measures to limit the number of voters in the precinct at one time, provide for one-way movement through the building and adequate space for lining up outside were discussed. At all precincts, spacing marks at least six feet apart as currently used in supermarkets will be

employed. Voting machines will be sanitized between voters. Election Officials (EOs) will not handle voter IDs; voters will be asked to hold up their ID so it is visible to the official. All agreed that shortages of EOs can be expected for this election. Ms. Morton did state that a number of EOs had expressed a willingness to work the election as well as assist with absentee in-person voting.

Ms. Virostko summarized current plans for in-person absentee voting. All necessary steps will be taken to minimize the risks for both voters and office staff. The number of people in the office at one time will be seriously limited. One-way flow through the office will be enforced to minimize encounters between voters. Staff will not handle voter IDs. As in the precincts, voters will hold up their ID so it is visible to staff. Clipboards, seating, door handles, counters, pens and anything else used by voters to complete the application and ballot will be sanitized after every use. Only two ballot marking stations will be installed. These will be spaced apart to comply with CDC guidelines and State recommendations regarding physical separation. The Registrar is also investigated other options for protecting office staff that includes the installation of clear plastic barriers as currently used in supermarkets and the post office to protect employees. Final plans for the layout of in-person voting are contingent upon coordination with Social Services. The safety of their first floor staff must also be taken into consideration.

There was some discussion about whether voters would have to wear a mask and gloves in order to vote. While the public taking certain precautions might be preferable, it is unlikely that the public could be forced to wear gloves and masks during voting. The Charlottesville Office of Voter Registration has no plans to enforce such a policy at this time. That could change pending guidelines from the Governor and CDC. In addition, the question was raised about the ability to identify voters from their photo ID if wearing a mask. While it was agreed that most voters could still likely be identified, even if wearing a mask, more discussion on this matter will be necessary.

No decisions were made regarding the schedule for the next meeting.
The meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

James Nix, Secretary

Anne Hemenway, Chair

Jon Bright, Vice Chair

***Subsequent to the April 7, 2020 Electoral Board Meeting, the Governor announced that the June 9, 2020 Primary would be moved to June 23, 2020.**

****The Absentee In-Person period will likely be adjusted due to the postponement of the Primary.**

^L&A for Absentee In-Person Voting will be rescheduled to a later date due to the postponement of the Primary.