

## **MINUTES**

### **City of Charlottesville Electoral Board Meeting of Aug 11, 2020**

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 6:05 pm on Tuesday August 11 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) and Director of Elections and General Registrar Melissa A. Morton.

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

On a motion by the Chair, seconded by the Vice Chair, the minutes from the July 7 meeting were unanimously approved without change.

#### **Public Comment**

Mr. Seth Ragosta, local counsel for the Virginia Democratic Party was the only member of the public present. He explained his role as an election observer and answered several board questions.

#### **Report of the General Registrar**

Ms. Morton informed the Board that, at its August 3 meeting, the Charlottesville City Council approved the proposed purchase of additional equipment for the November 3 election using funds from the CARES act appropriation. This vote was on the first reading; a second vote is planned for August 17 but no problems are expected.

Also on the agenda for the August 17 City Council meeting will be a decision to move the Central Absentee Precinct (CAP) from the basement conference room in City Hall to City Space. This move is necessary because the old location is inadequate to accommodate the anticipated dramatic increase in absentee voting and need for social distancing due to the pandemic. This move applies both to CAP activities on election day and to the pre-processing of ballots received by mail that is planned for six dates in October. Council approval is expected.

Ms. Morton briefed the Board on plans to produce a series of public service announcements (PSAs) in cooperation with the Albemarle County General Registrar. The PSAs will cover several critical election topics including voting by mail, voter registration, early voting, no-excuse absentee voting and changes to the voter ID requirements. There will also be one Spanish language PSA covering general

information on voting. The Chair praised the General Registrar's initiative in producing these PSAs and stressed that voting early must be emphasized.

Regarding election preparation, Ms. Morton reported that she is seeking canopies to shelter voters waiting to enter the polling places. She also reported that a City election security group has been established that includes representatives of the City Police, Sheriff, City Attorney, Commonwealth's Attorney, Fire Department, and other city officials. While in-person training for officers of election is the goal for this election, particularly for new officers, a set of virtual training programs is being developed for use in the event that in-person training is not possible due to the pandemic.

### **Appointment of Officers of Election**

Ms. Morton presented applications from 84 individuals seeking appointment as Officers of Election. There was a brief discussion on the superior qualifications of many new applicants and the fact that they are younger than many of our currently serving officers. With the addition of this group to the large contingent appointed at the July meeting, we now have a more than adequate roster of personnel to staff the ten precincts on November 3. On a motion by the Chair, seconded by the Vice Chair, the 84 applicants were unanimously appointed as Officers of Election for a three-year term. A list of those appointed is attached to these minutes.

### **Additional Election Preparation Issues**

In discussing the staffing levels required for the general election it was agreed that the combined turnout for absentee, early in-person, and election day voting could be as high as 90% of active voters. If the pattern for the June 23 primary persists roughly 50% of those who vote will do so in person on November 3. Election day staffing at the precincts will have to be augmented due to pandemic-related requirements including frequent cleaning of surfaces and management of social distancing. Ms. Morton reviewed the budget implications of the staffing requirements and concluded that funds are available to cover these costs.

Ms. Morton distributed copies of an updated election calendar, which was reviewed in detail with emphasis on events requiring Board participation such as acceptance testing of new electronic pollbooks, logic and accuracy testing of voting equipment and training of officers of election. The Chair emphasized the need for separate training for closers. She also stressed the need for emphasis on better cleaning of surfaces in the polling places.

In answer to a question from the Chair, Ms. Morton reported that state certification of the new DemTech electronic pollbooks is expected to be completed on August 15 and that the order for 30 of the new pollbooks and associated software would be submitted

on August 24. According to the vendor, delivery can be expected a few days later. The Board and staff plan to conduct acceptance testing of this equipment on Wednesday September 9 in the office of the General Registrar.

The next meeting will be held in the office of the Charlottesville General Registrar at 11:00 am on Monday, September 14 in conjunction with logic and accuracy testing of voting equipment to be used for absentee voting, which begins on Friday, September 18.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 pm.

*Respectfully submitted:*

James Nix, Secretary

Anne Hemenway, Chair

Jon Bright, Vice Chair