

MINUTES

City of Charlottesville Electoral Board Meeting of December 5, 2022

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 6:10 p.m. on Monday, December 5 in the office of the Charlottesville General Registrar. Those present were Electoral Board members Jon Bright (Chair), Anne Hemenway (Vice Chair) and Jim Nix (Secretary), and Director of Elections and General Registrar Taylor Yowell.

On a motion by the Vice Chair the agenda was unanimously approved without changes.

On a motion by the Vice Chair the minutes of the November 8-15 meeting were unanimously approved without change.

Public Comment

Mr. Dashad Cooper, co-chair of the Charlottesville Democratic Committee was present for the entire meeting. He made no initial comments but shared views of the local Democratic Party on several issues during the meeting at the request of the board.

Discussion Items

Before beginning the formal portion of the meeting, the Chair and Secretary, along with the General Registrar, spoke in recognition of the fact that this would be the final board meeting for Anne Hemenway. They commended her on her long service to the voters of Charlottesville and expressed regret that she would no longer be a member of the board. Ms. Hemenway will continue working on the revision of voting precinct boundaries and, as promised when she announced her departure from the board, she immediately completed an application for appointment as an officer of election.

November Election Recap – Ms. Yowell's review of the election was largely based on comments from the chief election officers at the November 29 post-election meeting. The primary focus was on refining pre-election training with more hands-on training to include a mock election at which participants would gain experience with the full range of election day tasks. Cross training would be emphasized potentially eliminating the need for equipment specialists as a wider range of election officials acquire proficiency with set up and take down of voting equipment. A tentative date for this training election was set for the last week in March 2023.

The unanticipated volume of same-day registration (SDR) was a second major topic in the post-election review. The huge demand for SDR in the most student-heavy precincts highlighted the need for more personnel to be trained in this process. In

addition, it was suggested that each packet of provisional ballots to be used for SDR contain a provisional ballot log form along with provisional ballot envelopes. Each election official administering the SDR process at a precinct would work independently with a separate pack of ballots, forms, and envelopes. To further enhance efficiency, a separate officer could be assigned to confirm the voter's precinct, oversee completion of a registration form, and confirm presentation of an ID to start the SDR process.

Reprecincting – The Vice Chair and the General Registrar will attend a meeting with voters in the Tonsler and Orangedale neighborhoods on December 8 to discuss the replacement of the Tonsler Park polling place. Following discussion of issues likely to be raised at that meeting, Ms. Yowell presented the board with an estimated timeline for the major steps in the reprecincting effort.

A draft ordinance required to make the precinct changes is being prepared and will be presented at the December 19 meeting of the City Council. The Vice Chair and General Registrar will speak briefly at that meeting about the need for the precinct changes. A second City Council meeting with a public hearing will be scheduled for 30-45 days after the December 19 meeting and a final vote by the council is likely in mid-February.

After passage of the ordinance, all affected voters will receive a letter updating their voting location. These will be generated from the state voter registration system (VERIS) which first must be updated to reflect the correct polling place for every address in the city. That time consuming task must be performed by the General Registrar and staff and this effort is taking place concurrently with the City Council approval process with the goal of implementation in time for the June 20, 2023 primary election.

Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) – The Secretary and the General Registrar will participate in a virtual meeting on RCV December 7 with Department of Elections personnel and Delegate Sally Hudson. RCV is authorized by current law for use in city council elections and there is interest in adopting RCV among members of the Charlottesville City Council. However, it would not be possible to do so before the certification and installation of an upgrade to the software for our Hart Verity voting machines. Completion of the upgrade is anticipated for the spring of 2023 but that would be too late for use in the June 20, 2023 primary. While the upgrade is likely to be installed in time for the November 2023 general election, the Board and General Registrar agree that adopting such a radical voting change right after the implementation of a major realignment of voting precincts would be very unwise and thus it should be delayed until the 2025 election.

Another RCV issue of great concern is the authorization by the Department of Elections for the use of ranked choice tabulation software that has not received state certification comparable to that required of all voting equipment and associated software. Because

of the complexity of vote counting in a multi-winner ranked choice election like that for the Charlottesville City Council, hand counting is not an option. Using tabulation software that has not been certified by the state for accuracy and reliability could leave the board and the registrar legally vulnerable in the event of a challenge to ranked-choice election results. This is an important issue to be discussed in the December 7 meeting.

The next meeting will be held in the office of the Charlottesville General Registrar at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday January 10, 2023.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

James Nix, Secretary

Jon Bright, Chair

Anne Hemenway, Vice Chair