

Minutes
Virginia Beach Electoral Board Meeting

Thursday, July 16 at 9:00 AM
2nd Floor Conference Room, Building 14
Virginia Beach Municipal Center

1. *Call to Order:* The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chair Lauralee Grim @ 9:00 AM with Board Members Tim Barrow and Jeffrey Marks present. Also present were Donna Patterson, Director of Elections/General Registrar, Christine Lewis, Deputy Registrar; and Cynthia Shortridge, Senior Registrar. Visitors attending were Robin Kessler and Amy Myers representing the Democratic Party of Virginia.
2. *Recognition of Citizens for Public Comments:* Vice-Chair Grim recognized Ms. Kessler and Ms. Myers and asked if they had any comments. They responded that they were present to observe and hoped to be able to attend future board meetings. They noted that they were particularly interested in following the process for administering the high levels of registration and absentee voting anticipated in this Presidential election year.
3. *Recognition of Retiring Board Chair Dean A. "Al" Ablowich and Welcome to Newly-Appointed Board Member Jeffrey Marks:* Board Secretary Tim Barrow, announced that Electoral Board Chairman Ablowich, in response to recent health concerns, regrettably submitted his resignation from the Board to the Circuit Court. Mr. Barrow noted that Mr. Ablowich served with distinction as Board Chairman for nearly 12 years and that, in this capacity, he made invaluable contributions to the citizens and voters of Virginia Beach and to the broader election community in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Mr. Barrow then proceeded to recognize and welcome Jeffrey Marks as the newly court-appointed member of the Board to fill Mr. Ablowich's position. Mr. Barrow noted that Mr. Marks is a managing partner with the Kaufman-Canoles law firm in Virginia Beach and that he has had firsthand exposure to the Board's work as legal counsel to candidates during the Board's recent election recounts.
4. *Adoption of the Agenda & Approval of Minutes:* T. Barrow moved that the agenda for the 7/16/20 Meeting and the Minutes of the 6/24/20 Board Meeting be approved. The motion was properly seconded.
5. *Preparations for 2020 Presidential Year Election:*
 - *Review of 2008, 2012 & 2016 Presidential elections.* D. Patterson provided an overview of previous Presidential year elections. C. Lewis provided the following numbers: In 2008, there was a turnout of 70.1% (202,000 votes, Registration of 288,000 & 26,232 absentee votes); in 2012, a turnout of 65%, with 197,000 votes, registration of 304,000, and 20,682 absentee votes; in 2016, turnout of 66%, with 204,300 votes, 309,500 registered voters and 30,050 absentee votes. The high number of in-person absentee voters at the GR office in 2008 resulted in creation of satellite in-person voting locations and a lane for curbside voting at the GR office. Lack of space in the GR office was identified as a major problem in 2008 and continued to plague subsequent elections despite minor temporary steps to help mitigate problem.
 - *Expectations for 2020 election.* D. Patterson reported that the 2020 election should set records for registration, turnout, and number of absentee voters. Special concern is having adequate space and staff to handle spacing requirements and much higher number of absentee-by-mail voters attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic. Discussion focused on the necessity of emergency arrangements with City to secure additional space in the Municipal Center and Building 14 to administer this election safely and effectively.
 - *EO Recruitment and Training.* C. Shortridge led discussion of this topic, noting loss of 300 EO's in June primary and goal of recruiting 1500-1600 EOs for November. Although COVID-19 creates a unique challenge for recruiting and retaining EOs, she remains optimistic that we will reach our recruitment goal. The Convention Center is reserved for EO training for 6 days from 10/19 through 10/24. Given COVID-19 spacing requirements, there will be a combination of on-line and in-person training with no breakout area

for equipment training. Video sessions on the GR's VB gov site will complement in-person training. The focus of training will be law changes and special COVID-19 precautions. Special training for Pollbook Supervisors is planned. The GR staff will share drafts of training materials and presentations with the Board well before training. As in the prior year, the plan is to schedule an information workshop for local office candidates and treasurers on reporting requirements, etc. Given use of upstairs conference room for absentee processing, an alternative meeting room will be required to accommodate this workshop. C. Shortridge also reported that she is working to arrange continuation of the successful student page program this year, but complications of COVID-19 may make this impossible.

- *2020 Election Budget, Office Staffing & Space Needs, Satellite Voting Locations and Precinct Location Changes.* C. Lewis led this discussion. She reported that \$2.2 million election year budget should be adequate to conduct election, but that City has been prepared in past to provide supplemental funding for unanticipated expenses in the Presidential election cycle. Budget includes funds to purchase high-speed DS 450 tabulator (scheduled delivery in mid-August) for absentee vote processing and rental of additional DS 200s as second tabulators for all larger precincts. Budget includes funds to hire 30-35 temporary workers to supplement permanent staff. Hiring is proceeding as soon as workstation space is available. Arrangements are underway to add two workstations in the downstairs flex-room. The upstairs conference room is scheduled to be available for GR use on 9/1/20. Meetings are scheduled later this week, with City to identify space options to accommodate call/data entry center, absentee processing, and election canvas. Concern expressed that 9/1/20 date for conference room availability may be late, given high number of absentee-by-mail applications and immediate need for workstations to accommodate temps to process these applications. Plan is to employ four satellite voting locations used in previous general elections (Bayside, Great Neck and Seatack Recreation Centers and the Kempsville Treasurer's Office). Given change in state law, these locations will have to be approved by ordinance by the City Council. We discussed the potential of absentee ballot drop boxes. Cost and ballot security concerns are factors, but a limited demonstration drop box project may be considered at next Electoral Board meeting. We also briefly discussed options for effectively distributing timely info to voters on ballot, constitutional amendments, COVID-19 recommendations etc. with follow-up planned for next Board meeting.

6. *Lunch Recess:* L. Grim recessed the meeting at 12:15 PM for a 15-minute break to reconvene at 12:30 PM.

7. *Call to Order from Recess:* L.Grim recalled the meeting to order at 12:35 PM and recognized T.Barrow to move the Meeting into Closed Session.

8. *Motion to Move into Closed Session:* Pursuant to the exemption from open meetings allowed by § 2.2-3711 A1 and A34 of the Code of Virginia, as amended, T. Barrow moved that this meeting of the Board be recessed into closed session for the following purposes: Annual Performance Review of the General Registrar and review of the Virginia Beach Voting Systems Security Program.

Moved by: T. Barrow

Seconded by: J. MARKS

RECORDED VOTE:

Marks YES

Grim YES

Barrow YES

9. *Motion to Reconvene in Open Session:* Pursuant to § 2.2-3712 D Closed meeting procedures; certification of proceedings, J. Marks moved that the Board move to open session and certified that to the best of each member's knowledge (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the meeting by the Electoral Board, specifically, annual

performance evaluation of the General Registrar and review of the Virginia Beach Voting Systems Security Program.

Moved by: J. Marks

Seconded by: T. Barrow

RECORDED VOTE:

Marks YES

Grim YES

Barrow YES

10. *Other Business to be Brought Before the Board:* D. Patterson reminded the Board that Annual Electoral Board Training will be conducted virtually on July 20th and July 21st in the Building 14 Conference Room. L.Grim asked if there was other business to be brought before the Board. Hearing none, the Board set the next meetings of the Board for Tuesday, August 25 @10:00 AM and Monday, September 21 @9:00 AM. The locations of these meetings will be established later based on space available.
11. Adjournment – Having completed its work, the Board Meeting was adjourned at 3:30 PM.

Approved:

Jeffrey Marks, Chair _____

Lauralee Grim, Vice-Chair _____

Timothy Barrow, Secretary _____

