

# City of Virginia Beach Electoral Board Meeting Minutes

December 17, 2020

Building 14, Second Floor, Agriculture Conference Room

The Virginia Beach Electoral Board Meeting was called to order by Chairman Jeff Marks at 1:06 PM, Thursday, December 17, 2020 with other Electoral Board members present: Lauralee Grim, Vice Chairman and Tim Barrow, Secretary. Staff presented included Donna Patterson, Director of Elections/General Registrar, and Christine Lewis, Deputy Registrar. These minutes constitute the account of proceedings required by the Code of Virginia §24.2-107 and are prepared in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order 11<sup>th</sup> Edition.

Diana DeBoe, Craig Hudgins, and Marvin Weniger were the citizens present for this meeting.

On a motion by T. Barrow the agenda for the meeting was approved. On a motion by T. Barrow the October 29, November 4, and November 24 minutes were approved for filing and authorized for final placement on the Virginia Beach Voter Registration and Elections website.

- Director Patterson lead a discussion regarding the 2020 Election. Deputy Lewis, Board members, and citizens in attendance offered comments and suggestions. Grossly insufficient office space, and the shortage of permanent elections, the shortage and level of proficiency of temporary employees were highlighted, as concerns along with the extraordinarily high human and financial costs of running this election with its dependence on overtime hours. The suitability of the Kempsville and Seatack satellite locations was questioned and the appropriate qualifications and staffing of satellites were noted as concerns to be addressed prior to the November 2021 election. It was noted that Staff at the Call Center established to respond to citizen questions needed additional training and access to up-to-date election information in order to respond accurately to citizen questions. The absence of well-trained call center staff resulted in additional email and telephone requests being directed to permanent staff diverting them from other election responsibilities. The impact of the new laws adopted by the General Assembly and later directives by the Virginia Department of Elections were discussed at length. The organization of CAP was discussed with a view to how to more efficiently administer the increase in absentee by-mail voting.

Citizens attending the meeting raised concerns regarding the volume of absentee (early) voting and noted that multiple absentee ballot request forms distributed unsolicited to voters by non-government parties raised public questions about the election process. Also, sample ballots distributed by the VB Elections office to registered voters in an effort to better inform the public about the election resulted in some confusion at the polls. Several voters actually attempted to cast sample ballots as official ballots. It was noted that sample ballots, if distributed in the future, should be printed on a distinctive color paper and be clearly watermarked as samples.

The Board requested that sufficient space and additional permanent staff must be a priority of the Office. City staff responsible for finding locations be informed of the great need to have another location for voting, housing staff, the entire absentee process, and the Canvass. Additionally, The Board suggests that any new location meet the criteria set forth by the Elections Office and Board during the budget process reflect the 2020 election experience. Additionally, the Board will join the Director and Deputy when budget presentations outlining additional staffing and space needs are made to the City Administration and City Council. T. Barrow suggested that the staff use the Board of Supervisors' presentation by the James City County Elections Department as a model to present the VB 2020 Election to the City Administration and Council.

- Plans are in place for the January 5, 2020 House of Delegates 90<sup>th</sup> District election. Virginia Beach has only one sector of one precinct which contains less than 85 voters in that district. The remainder of HD 90 is in Norfolk. Although this VB sector includes fewer than 85 voters, the staff and Board will have to follow all normal protocols for administering an election. Logic and Accuracy Testing for voting equipment for Precinct 0061 Baker and Absentee (early) voting was conducted on December 11. Following code requirements, both local party chairs were notified in advance. Absentee voting began in building 14 on Monday, December 14. To date, no one residing in HD90 has requested an absentee ballot or requested to vote absentee. Individuals residing within the precinct have made requests but were denied as they did not reside with HD90's boundaries. In addition to staff, the chief and assistant chief of this precinct will staff the polling location on election day, January 5, 2021. Unofficial results will be shared with Norfolk Voter Registration and Elections office and the Virginia Department of Elections. The Canvass will begin at 10 AM on January 6 with Provisional Voter review being the first order of business. At 11:00 AM, Canvass documentation will be reviewed. If no provisional ballots are cast under the state's no-ID provision, the VB portion of the HD90 canvass should be completed on Wednesday. Based on whether there are individuals who have filed a provisional ballot under the no ID provision, the process may be completed on Wednesday. However, it needs to be noted that the Board has until Tuesday, January 12, to complete the process.
- Director Patterson shared the Department of Elections (ELECT) 2021 Calendar establishing filing and reporting deadlines for the year. Copies of the schedule will be provided to the Board.
- Deputy Lewis reported that the elections office's contact in the city's IT Department has been working to confirm the City's Compliance with the Commonwealth's election security standards. Discussion of this matter will be discussed in a closed executive session at a future Board meeting consistent with state law and ELECT guidance.
- Redistricting information will be discussed at future Board Meetings as additional data is received from ELECT.

- On a motion by L. Grim, the Board recommended moving the voting location of Bonney Precinct (40) to Princess Anne High School. This recommendation will be forwarded to ELECT for concurrence and then will be submitted to City Council for its approval.

Under other business to come before the Board, L. Grim asked that data be prepared for use by the city's legislative spokesperson and shared with Virginia Beach House of Delegates and Senate representatives as the General Assembly discusses and acts on legislation that will impact elections.

The Board and staff thanked outgoing Secretary Tim Barrow for his able service to the citizens of Virginia Beach and the election community. Having been a member of the Electoral Board since 2006, Mr. Barrow long distinguished service was noted with great appreciation. On a motion by T. Barrow, the Board approved L. Grim as temporary secretary until the new Board meets and takes actions. The next meeting of the Board will coincide with the January 5, 2021 Canvass. Having completed its work, the board meeting was adjourned.



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Jeffrey Marks, Chairman



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Lauralee Grim, Vice Chairman

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Timothy E. Barrow, Secretary