

City of Richmond



CHERLYN STARLET STEVENS
SECRETARY

JAMES M. NACHMAN
CHAIR

JOYCE KING SMITH
VICE-CHAIR

Electoral Board

Meeting Minutes
May 19, 2022

"SIC ITUR AD ASTRA"

SUCH IS THE WAY OF THE STARS

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Electoral Board was opened with Chairman Nachman presiding. In attendance were Joyce Smith, Vice-Chair, C. Starlet Stevens, Secretary, Keith Balmer, Director of Elections, Jerry Ingram, Deputy Registrar, and Caitlin Shelton, Executive Assistant to Director Balmer and Board, Cynthia Johnson, Absentee Coordinator, Donald Gaines, Assistant Registrar, Christian Javins Assistant Technician, Tyler Lincks, Representative of Print Elect.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no public comment items.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Chairman Nachman moved and Vice-Chair Smith seconded that the February 1, 2022 and February 22, 2022 minutes be approved as amended by Chairman Nachman, Secretary Stevens opposed. Secretary Stevens stated that both the drafts for these minutes had been posted on our website; she further stated that a draft is to be posted within 10 days of a meeting taking place. Secretary Stevens also stated that it was imperative that the minutes be accurate and account for all comments made by the public.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PAGE PROGRAM

Donald Gaines, Assistant Registrar talked about a pilot program, the Election Day High School Page Program. This is basically where we will be targeting high school seniors that are at least 18 years old. This program would allow them to work in our precincts this November. We will be talking with the Richmond Public School system and their history teachers to identify students that would be interested in participating. The student must be in a government or civics class and also would need their parents' permission to participate. Their duties would entail greeting voters, welcoming them to the polls, and handing out information about what's on the ballot. Additionally, they could assist with keeping order in the lines, should there be lines on Election Day; they could assist in providing seating, managing placeholders for voters

who may have difficulty standing, etc. They can hand out "I Voted" stickers and also assist in breaking down the polling place at the end of the day. They will be prohibited from entering the polling area

Mr. Gaines stated that this is a very popular program throughout the state. The Pages cannot be paid for this service but a certificate can be issued for them to certify that they have performed this public service.

ELECTION OFFICER UPDATE

Caitlin Shelton, Executive Assistant to Director Balmer and the Board reviewed the newly revised Election Officer Affirmation Form. She stated that also she wanted to make our Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs be held more accountable. She reviewed a new form, the "November 2022 Post-Election Survey of Election". They are working on a grading scale for the Chiefs and their Assistants to hold them accountable for a better outcome on Election Day. Also, they are starting a newsletter which will be sent out two to three times a year to keep the Election Officers updated about what's going on in our office.

Director Balmer discussed Election Officer Pay, and how the City of Richmond compares to Chesterfield and Henrico Counties. In regard to training classes, we pay our officers \$25 per class compared to Chesterfield and Henrico which pays \$20 per class. Henrico pays their Chiefs \$200 and Chesterfield pays \$210, we pay our chiefs \$220. Our Assistant Chiefs are paid \$140 and regular Election Officers are paid \$130. Henrico pays Assistant Chiefs \$180 and regular Election Officers \$150. Chesterfield pays their Assistant Chiefs \$175 and regular Election Officers \$150.

Director Balmer plans on introducing online training for this November's election for regular Election Officers. The Chief and Assistant Chief classes will still be in person. He feels that online training will be a good cost cutting measure which in turn, will allow us to start paying our Election Officers more. They will not be paid for taking online classes. In the case of Election Officers who are not tech savvy or do not have access to a computer at home, they can make an appointment and come into our office to take the training course on a designated computer.

Secretary Stevens made a motion to go with Director Balmer's plan to do more online training, which will free up money to pay our Assistant Chiefs and regular Election Officers more money. Vice-Chair Smith, seconded, all were in favor, motion passed.

NOVEMBER 2021 STATEMENT OF RESULTS

Director Balmer noted that there was one Statement of Results that was completed for the Central Absentee Precinct (referred to as CAP) that showed some discrepancies. These absentee voters voted either by mail or in person during the 45 day window of in person absentee, which is referred to as early voting. He decided that the Chief and Assistant Chief of CAP should compile all of the results tapes from all the voting machines used during early voting and all of the voting machine tapes from the machines used to process the ballots by mail. This decision put a lot of pressure on the Chief and Assistant of CAP because they were now responsible for ascertaining the results from the voting machines used during early voting, and they were not the Chief and Assistant Chief of early voting. Those voting locations had their own Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs. In hindsight, it would have been prudent to allow the Chief and Assistant Chiefs of those vote centers to complete their own SOR's. Moving forward, he stated that this will be the practice.

SECURITY CAMERAS

Director Balmer said his office is working with Johnson Controls who will be installing additional security cameras to the building. This is in addition to the cameras that we already have here which at this time are not active. We are in the process of purchasing a server which will be recording for a minimum of 14 days which is required by City policy. Once voting starts, he is requiring that each camera have the ability to record footage for the maximum amount of time as required by the Department of Elections which is 30 days following the deadline to certify the election or 30 days following a recount. This will be done because we will continue to have the three absentee drop boxes and they need to be under camera surveillance and we need to be able to access any footage following the deadline to certify the election. There will be roughly 20 cameras on the premises. They will cover the tech center that is downstairs, the front bottom wing of the building, the secure area that is downstairs in the old Windstream area, and we **will** have cameras that are facing the parking lot. Our security guard will get a new desk that will have a monitor on it so he can have real time footage of what is going on in the premises.

RANKED CHOICE VOTING UPDATE

Director Balmer said that Councilwoman Katherine Jordan is introducing an ordinance that, if approved, will change City Council races from the method of voting that is currently in place, which is called plurality voting or winner takes all voting, and it would change to what is called ranked choice voting. Ranked choice voting is a method of voting that allows voters to rank the candidates in an election in order of preference. If no candidate receives more than 50% of first place votes, the candidate with the fewest first place votes is eliminated and voters who ranked their first choice will have their ballots counted for the second choice. Candidates will be removed until one candidate reaches at least 50% of the total vote count. Ranked choice voting will be discussed in a small operations meeting scheduled for May 25. From there, it will proceed to a full vote at a future Council meeting.

REDISTRICTING UPDATE

Director Balmer stated that City Council voted on one of five maps that were presented to them by the redistricting team which included him and Gerry Hebert. This was the map that made the population of our nine council districts proportional. The city's population is now at 228,501 and the city has nine council districts. Each district should have a population that is within 5% of the average. The median average is 25,389 residents. In order to achieve this balance, districts 2, 6 and 7 had to lose population because they received the most growth, and district 3 would have to gain population. He has worked with City Council and the city attorney's office to draft ordinances, change sections of the city code, and produce new district maps as part of the process. City Council will vote on this May 23. If they vote yes, the new redistricting map will become official on June 23.

CASINO REFERENDUM UPDATE

Director Balmer said that earlier this year, City Council voted 8 to 1 to petition the Circuit Court to approve a second casino referendum which would appear on the November 2022 ballot. Two months ago, a judge granted the city's request and Director Balmer has received a copy of the court order. He said the tricky part to all of this is that there is an expectation that an amendment would be included in the state budget that will ask for an

economic study to be done to determine if Petersburg would be a viable option for a casino. This study is expected to take a year and it is likely that this amendment will attempt to prevent the city from having a do over in regards to the casino referendum. He further stated that the city's Director of Economic Development, Leonard Sledge, told City Council that since no one has appealed the Richmond Circuit Court order, the city believes that the casino referendum will in fact appear on the November ballot regardless of what language may be in the state budget.

SPECIAL ELECTION LAWSUIT UPDATE

Director Balmer stated that last year, a lawsuit was filed by Paul Goldman that argued that the elections that were held last year for House of Delegates were unconstitutional because Virginians voted on outdated district maps from 2011, which did not reflect the population growth over the last decade. The reason Virginian's voted on outdated maps was because the census data was delayed due to the pandemic. The goal of this lawsuit is to have the court set one year terms for delegates who were elected last year. If this lawsuit is successful, it would force Virginia to hold another round of elections for the House of Delegates this summer, either late August or early September. This case is being heard in the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit.

NEW BUSINESS

Caitlin Shelton stated the Republican Party had submitted the names of Phillip Sisk, Eddy Aliff, Todd R. Flowers, Allyson Waller, Mary Dillon, Christine Wilson, Sheila M. Furey and Lauren Henley to serve as Election Officers. Secretary Stevens motioned to appoint these individuals as election officers, Vice-Chair Smith seconded, all were in favor, motion passed.

Chairman Nachman spoke about the letter that had been addressed to the Electoral Board regarding improper actions and inquired if Vice-Chair Smith and Secretary Stevens had taken the required training referenced in this letter. He indicated that he would appear at the State Board of Elections meeting on May 24 to report that all members had taken the required training courses.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Virginia Anderson spoke about absentee ballot address discrepancies.
Susan Hogge spoke about inadequate training of CAP Election Officers.
Phyllis Riina spoke about missing postmark/IM barcodes from absentee ballots.
Barbara Zedler spoke about the post-election report from November 2021.
Sandra Antoine spoke in opposition of ranked choice voting.
Jane Newell spoke about the League of Women Voters studies-program report.

CLOSED SESSION - SECURITY PLAN FOR VOTING EQUIPMENT

Secretary Stevens read the motion to hold a closed meeting pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A) (19) of the Freedom of Information Act to discuss the security plan for voting equipment. The Certification of Closed Meeting was read by Secretary Stevens according to Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia, all members of the Board signed "yes" to the certification unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Nachman.

NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting date will be Tuesday, June 28, 2022 at 4:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned

James M. Nachman
Chairman to the Electoral Board

Joyce K. Smith
Vice Chairwoman to the Electoral Board

Cherlyn S. Stevens
Secretary to the Electoral Board