

# City of Richmond



CHERLYN STARLET STEVENS  
SECRETARY

JAMES M. NACHMAN  
CHAIR

JOYCE KING SMITH  
VICE-CHAIR

## Electoral Board

Meeting Minutes  
July 26, 2021

"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 James Nachman presiding. In attendance were Joyce Smith, Vice-Chair; C. Starlet Stevens, Secretary; Keith Balmer, Director of Elections; Jerry Richardson, Deputy Director and Adriene Davis, Exec. Asst. to the Electoral Board. Additional attendees to speak were Elizabeth Butler and Barbara Zedler, both of the Republican Election Integrity Working Group; Jane Newell, League of Women Voters; James Minor, President of the Richmond NAACP; Susan Swecker, Chairwoman of the Virginia Democratic Party; Jamie Nolan, Chairwoman of the Richmond Democratic Party and Mr. Leon Benjamin, member of the Republican Party.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

Mrs. Elizabeth Butler spoke of the discrepancies in the canvass results report and noted that 7 of 10 races were reported incorrectly. Mrs. Butler met with Director Balmer and they both agreed that the discrepancies should be corrected. Mrs. Butler also appealed to the Board to vote to revise the abstracts of the 7 races and re-submit the corrections to the Department of Elections.

In addition, through a FOIA request she obtained an Error Results Report revealing several precincts that had differences in the turnouts vs. the number of votes in the House of Delegates races. Mrs. Butler suggested the Board investigate whether the voter tickets were incorrect or if voters were given incorrect ballots.

Ms. Barbara Zedler's concerns were directed to Election Officer Management and sited [Section 24.2-115](#) from the Code of Virginia which basically states that all precincts should have equal representation throughout the City of Richmond if practicable, particularly Chiefs & Asst. Chiefs positions, starting with the November 2, 2021 General Election. Specifically the committee request the registrar's office interact with the Republican Committee's Chairman or Chairman's representative before each election to facilitate training and precinct assignments of all available new republican officers.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Secretary Stevens motion the approval of the July 12, 2021 meeting minutes, Vice Chair Smith seconded. All were in favor, motion passed.

### **JUNE ABSTRACTS OF VOTES**

Secretary Stevens recommended that a corrected abstract report be submitted to the state to have a record. Chairman Nachman asked Director Balmer to give signs of discrepancies. Director Balmer explained that once the Department of Elections certify election result the state system is locked and changes are not possible. Director Balmer explained that discrepancies are not unusual to every election and the duty of the Registrar and the Electoral Board are to adjudicate and explain the reasons for the discrepancies.

Director Balmer recommend presenting the corrected numbers to the State and also noted that the discrepancies did not affect the outcome of the election.

Chairman Nachman suggest that in the future the abstract of votes be compared with the final spread sheets before the Board gives approval. Secretary Stevens motioned the Board send the corrections to the State and include the corrected report in the minutes for public viewing. Vice Chair Smith seconded. All were in favor, motion passed.

### **POLLBOOK DEMONSTRATION**

During the June 8, 2021 Dual Primary, the poll books displayed different information than what was printed on the voter tickets. This happened only in precincts that held multiple House of Delegates races known as “splits”. Why was the information displayed on the poll book screen different from the printed tickets? Jason Reed – Warehouse Technician Manager explained that the problem was a software limitation that only applied to the split precincts. Director Balmer will provide specialized training geared to the precincts that will host House of Delegate splits and precincts settings.

### **ELECTION OFFICER MANAGEMENT**

Ms. Barbara Zedler previously discussed this item in Public Comments. Individual parties will submit names of persons to represent their parties.

### **PRECINCT LOCATIONS**

Secretary Stevens motioned to allow Mr. James Minor – President of the NAACP to speak, Vice Chair Smith seconded. All were in favor, motion passed. Mr. Minor brought to the Board’s attention the distances the citizens of Southside and parts of the Church Hill areas must travel to vote. Mr. Minor suggested we go back to the drawing board and make access to voting easier for the constituents.

Director Balmer’s concern is with the time frame in which to implement precinct additions. He noted “the law states that precincts are not to be added 60 days prior to an elections”. He will reach out to the City Deputy Attorneys’ Office to provide legal clarification whether we are within the law to add precincts this year. Director Balmer also noted that the drawing board is upon us which will come in form of redistricting and will cause a re-evaluation of precincts.

### **SUNDAY VOTING**

Previously the motion to include Sunday voting was brought to the table, no one seconded. Chairman Nachman understood the concerns of the other Board members that the additional day of early voting will overwork the Registrar's staff. Chairman Nachman reported that a pledge from the City and the State that will support funding to finance Sunday voting and allow additional help to the Registrar's staff. Vice Chair Smith motioned to allow Sunday voting. Chairman Nachman seconded. Secretary Stevens abstained. Motion passed.

Mr. Benjamin commented in the opposition of Sunday voting and offered that another way is found to educate the people of the city on the importance of voting.

Susan Swecker, Chairwoman of the Democratic Party of Virginia, spoke in support of Sunday voting and every opportunity to make voting easier and accessible, also to insure support of funding to finance Sunday voting.

Vice Chairwoman Smith amended her motion to allow Sunday voting on October 17, and October 24, 2021 as an addition. Chairman Nachman seconded. Secretary Stevens was in opposition on Sunday voting. Motion passed.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Director Balmer reported on providing voting materials in Spanish. Director Balmer cited [Section 24.2-128](#) of the Code of Virginia, localities with 5% or more population of minority communities must provide voting material in the language of the affected minorities. We know that the City of Richmond is within that percentage or more in the Spanish communities. With the purpose of adhering to the law, we will provide material in Spanish.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

In agreement with Mr. Minor, Ms. Swecker also request that Richmond strongly consider expanding satellite voting locations. In agreement, Director Balmer's plan is to focus more on expanding the satellites located in the Southside and East End primarily because as experienced in the November 2020 election, as more voters are comfortable voting early, there may be less turnout on election day and more focus on voting early. Time restraints will not allow the expansion for this November however, the expansion will be implemented in election year 2022.

Ms. Jane Newell from the League of Women Voters ask that we improve time frame in which we notify the public of meetings and posting minutes.

**NEXT MEETING DATES**

The next meeting will be posted for August 19, 2021 at 4:00 PM.

Secretary Stevens moved to adjourn the meeting, Vice Chairwomen Smith seconded.

---

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