

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 Registrar and Adriene Davis, Exec. Asst. to the Electoral Board. Additional attendees to speak were Mrs. Elizabeth Butler and Dr. 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 Democratic Party of Virginia; Jamie Nolan, Chair of the Richmond Democratic Party and Mr. Leon Benjamin, member of the Republican Committee.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Mrs. Elizabeth Butler spoke of alleged discrepancies in the canvass results report and claimed that 7 of 10 races were reported incorrectly. Mrs. Elizabeth Butler met with Registrar Balmer and they both agreed that some alleged discrepancies should be corrected. Mrs. Elizabeth Butler also appealed to the Board to vote to revise the abstracts of the 7 races and re-submit new figures if incorrect to the Department of Elections.

In addition, through a FOIA request, Mrs. Elizabeth Butler obtained an Error Results Report allegedly showing 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.

Dr. Barbara Zedler spoke and her concerns were directed to Election Officer Management and cited [Section 24.2-115](#) of the Code of Virginia which 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 Republican Integrity Working Group requests the registrar's office to 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 moved to approve the July 12, 2021 meeting minutes, Vice Chair Smith seconded. All were in favor, the motion passed.

JUNE ABSTRACTS OF VOTES

Secretary Stevens recommended that a corrected abstract report be submitted to the State Board of Elections. Chairman James Nachman asked Registrar Balmer to correct any inaccuracies. Registrar Balmer explained that once the Department of Elections certifies election results, the state system is locked and changes are not possible. Registrar Balmer explained that discrepancies are not unusual in every election and the duty of the Registrar and the Electoral Board is to explain the reasons for the discrepancies.

Registrar Keith Balmer recommended that any corrected results be sent to the Department of Elections presenting the corrected results to the State and noted that the discrepancies did not affect the outcome of the election.

Chairman James Nachman suggested that in the future, that any abstract of votes be compared with the Registrar's final spread sheet before the Board gives approval. Secretary Stevens moved that the Board send the corrections to the Department of Elections and include the corrected report in the minutes for public viewing. Vice Chair Joyce Smith seconded. All were in favor, the 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 had more than one House of Delegates race known as "splits". The question was asked, why? Jason Reed – Warehouse Technician Manager explained that the problem was a software limitation that only applied to the split precincts. Registrar Balmer will provide specialized training geared to the precincts that have House of Delegate splits.

PRECINCT LOCATIONS

Secretary Stevens moved to allow Mr. James Minor – President of the Richmond City 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 Church Hill must travel to vote. Mr. Minor suggested we go back to the drawing board and make access to voting easier for these constituents.

Registrar 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 election". He will reach out to the City Attorneys' Office to provide legal clarification whether we are within the law to add additional precinct locations this year. He also noted that redistricting will cause a re-evaluation of the precincts

SUNDAY VOTING

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

Mr. Leon Benjamin member of the Richmond City Republican Committee spoke in the opposition to Sunday voting and offered that another way be found to educate the people of the City of Richmond on the importance of voting.

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

OTHER BUSINESS

Registrar Balmer reported on providing voting materials in Spanish. Registrar Balmer cited Virginia Code [Section 24.2-128](#), that states that localities with 5% or more population of minority communities must be provided voting material in the language of the affected minority. We know that the City of Richmond is within that percentage or more in the Spanish speaking community. The Board acknowledged that voting materials in Spanish will be provided in accordance to the law.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

In agreement with Mr. Minor, Ms. Swecker also requested that The City of Richmond strongly consider expanding satellite voting locations. In agreement, Registrar Keith Balmer's plan is to focus more on expanding the satellites located in the Southside and East End. 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 asked that we improve the time frame in which we notify the public of the meetings and of the posting of 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 Chair to the Electoral Board

Cherlyn S. Stevens
Secretary to the Electoral Board