

City of Richmond



JOYCE KING SMITH
SECRETARY

CHERLYN STARLET STEVENS
CHAIRWOMAN

JOHN N. AMBROSE
VICE-CHAIR

Electoral Board

Meeting Minutes

March 6th, 2023

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Electoral Board was opened with Chairwoman Cherlyn S. Stevens presiding.

In attendance were Joyce Smith, Secretary, John N. Ambrose, Vice-Chair, Keith Balmer, General Registrar of Elections, Jerry Richardson, Deputy Director, Kelsey Zentmyer, Training Supervisor and Development, Caitlin Shelton, Executive Assistant to the Registrar, and Destiny Fleming, Assistant Manager in Election Services.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were no public comment items.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Vice-Chair Ambrose mentions that there needs to be two corrections to the February 1st, 2023 minutes. The first being to strike a phrase under the discussion regarding electoral board elections, and the second change being under the discussion regarding electoral board policy documentation

to add the word "only" to the sentence of "...policy that if election officer classes are offered **only** in-person...."

VOTER TURNOUT AND OTHER DATA FROM THE FEBRUARY SPECIAL ELECTION

Chairwoman Stevens turns this discussion over to Registrar Balmer. Registrar Balmer states that the total turnout for the Special Election that was on February 21st, 2023 was 32,178. The breakdown is as follows; Registrar Balmer passed out a sheet for the turnout on Election Day, which was 17,845 voters (11% of total number of registered voters). For the CAP team, the turnout was a total of 10,393. There was 4,237 by mail and 6,156 in-person. The breakdown for in-person, is 5,047 that voted at the Office of Elections. 1,109 voted at the Hickory Hill Community Center. Registrar Balmer additionally congratulates Susan Hogge, Chief of the CAP team, for her leadership, teamwork with other precinct chiefs, and detail for creating a new SOR for the CAP team.

POST-ELECTION REPORT FROM THE PRECINCTS

Destiny Fleming who is the Assistant Manager in Election Services, states that on Election Day she and Caitlin Shelton were tasked to visit precincts for small troubleshooting, staffing, and paperwork issues. Out of the 72 precincts, 4 were severely understaffed. The four precincts were precinct 310 (Calhoun Center), precinct 610 (Bellemeade Community Center), precinct 611 (United Nations Church), and precinct 414 (Southampton Elementary School). The general consensus from staff shortages seemed to be caused by election chiefs not turning in acknowledgment forms on-time, the lack of training for this election cycle, not having enough notice to take off of work, child-care, and the commute to precincts not being easy due to moving arrangements. Destiny also gave a special thanks to Barbara Artise, Jennifer Foster, Christopher Mason, and Wanda Tyler for agreeing to go to the understaffed precincts to help out. Due to the Special Election being announced at a late notice, there were a few chiefs who were not able to work due to scheduling. Experienced officers and assistant chiefs stepped up to serve as chiefs. The officers who have stepped up were Maya Base from precinct 206, Iris Thompson from precinct 501, Archi Dandly from precinct 404, Tinesha Mitchell from precinct 508, Tammy Williams from precinct 902, and assistant chief Jane Hazelwood from precinct 909.

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FOR CHIEF ELECTION OFFICER

Secretary Smith started this discussion by mentioning Chief Officer Warlisha Whisonant from Precinct 908. Warlisha took the initiative to step up and check on other precincts that were having issues on Election Day. Secretary Smith said that Warlisha is now a new member of our post-election canvass team. Secretary Smith believed that Warlisha is someone that should be given appreciation due to her outstanding efforts on Election Day, and for her service the day after during Canvass Day. Jerry Richardson, Deputy Director, said that one thing election officers really enjoy is receiving letters from the electoral board. All were in accordance, and an official letter of appreciation will be sent to Warlisha to express our gratitude towards her hard work.

REDISTRICTING PROJECT FOR ELECT

For this topic of discussion, Kelsey Zentmyer started by giving a quick overview of what redistricting looked like in preparation for the upcoming special election. Due to redistricting, the old Senate District 9 was changed to Senate District 14. Right now VERIS has prepared for that and all of the new redistricting. Kelsey stated that the upcoming special election needs to be for the old Senate District 9 lines. In order to make this happen, office staff had to take the street files from Senate District 9 and compare them to the street files from Senate District 14. Street files, as Kelsey explained, is a list of all streets and numbers within a single district. Over the course of a few days and excel formulas, the correct street segments for this upcoming special election was sorted out and sent over to ELECT. Registrar Balmer said that all new state senate and house of delegate districts go into effect for the June 2023 primaries.

Registrar Balmer stated that he had met with the Department of Elections on Monday, February 27th. ELECT told him that if he were to find a street segment that was missed, that he can still go back and correct that mistake, even during the course of Early Voting. With the excel sheet that was given to ELECT, ELECT will be creating the special election within the old district 9 lines. Vice-Chair Ambrose raised the question that since ELECT created an election into VERIS, how is this going to effect how the office populates the electronic poll books with the data and the paper poll books for the precincts. Registrar Balmer responded by saying that ELECT finalized the information and have already created the poll books. Registrar Balmer makes a recommendation for the electoral board to come in Sunday, March 26th to review the poll books and to ensure the data is correct.

In regards to election officer training, Registrar Balmer stated that there will be Chief and Assistant Chief training on the morning of Saturday, March 18th.

The number of registered voters who are in the 9th Senate District is 56,764. As for these voters receiving notification about the election, there will be efforts pushed onto the office website, the media, press releases, outreach, and social media.

BALLOT ORDER FOR MARCH 28TH SPECIAL ELECTION

Registrar Balmer stated that the ballot order for the upcoming special election has been created. For absentee by mail, 200 ballots per participating precincts (with the exception of precinct 310 due to its very low turnout) have been ordered. The total number of ballots ordered for absentee by mail, is 4,900. For Early Voting, Registrar Balmer said that he also ordered 200 ballots per precinct. The reason for this is because there were only two precincts that had more than 200 voters for the special election that just occurred in February. Vice-Chair Ambrose raised the question if express voting will be available. Registrar Balmer answered by stating that the office decided not to and that voters would be checked in directly into VERIS. This will allow our Absentee Coordinator, Cynthia Johnson, to generate her absentee report immediately following the conclusion of Early Voting. Finally for Election Day, Registrar Balmer said that he ordered 11,600 ballots, which is 500 ballots per precinct. Registrar Balmer said that all ballot orders have been adjusted based on the fact that this election will have a lower turnout than the previous special election that occurred in February.

STAFFING PROCEDURES FOR PRECINCTS ON ELECTION DAY

Caitlin Shelton, Executive Assistant to the General Registrar, stated that on Election Day the office had several assistant chiefs and election officers who stepped up to serve as precinct chiefs. With this upcoming election, Caitlin would like to utilize a few chiefs who are not working this election to cross-train and shadow the assistant chiefs and chiefs who will be working on election day, to have them as a helping hand to work with the chiefs who will be working. For example, Debra Williams and Maya Bae. According to Caitlin, Maya stepped up in precinct 206 and will be kept there to shadow the returning chief of that precinct, Brooks Braun. Crystal Paige, an experienced Chief at precinct 703, will be going to the Calhoun Center. So far for the experienced Chiefs that the office has includes; Stacey Harris, Debra Williams, Ivern Harrison, Dabney Powell, Brooks Braun, and Jada Flowers. Caitlin Shelton states that she is confident that there is enough seasoned chiefs who will be fully staffed at the precincts for the upcoming special election.

NEW BUSINESS

For new business, Registrar Balmer mentions that we will use this time to discuss Early Voting for the upcoming special election. Early Voting will begin next Monday on March 13th, 2023. There will be only one location used for Early Voting, at the Office of Elections. It will run Monday to Friday from 10am to 4pm. The two Saturdays of Early Voting (March 18th and March 25th) will be from 9am to 5pm. As for ballot drop boxes, there will be drop boxes at the Office of Elections and City Hall from March 13th until March 25th. Absentee Ballots will be mailed out Friday, March 10th. There are 2,800 ballots that will be sent out. Testing of the machines that will be used for Early Voting will be Friday, March 10th at 12pm. As for the provisional ballot hearing, that will be on Friday, March 31st at 9am.

Another topic of new business was brought up by Caitlin Shelton. Caitlin stated that she has a nomination from the Republican Party for Joy Boss to be an election officer. Chairwoman Stevens makes a motion to accept the new election officer by the name of Joy S. Boss. Secretary Smith seconds the motion. All were in favor, **the motion passes**.
Going forward in the future for election officer nominations, the electoral board has decided that for an election officer to be appointed, for them to be presented with the names of the nominations on a document beforehand.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

For public comment of items not on the agenda, member of the public and a member of the League of Women Voters, Ms. Jane Newell, wanted to verify that the location that people will be voting in for the special election is the same location as they would have voted last November. Registrar Balmer responded by saying that she was correct. Ms. Newell's second question was to ask what is the deadline date for receipt of mail in ballots. Registrar Balmer answered by saying that it is on Friday, March 31st at noon. Ms. Newell stated that the Citizen Portal, located on the ELECT's website, fails to provide voters with their correct registration information. She commended the office for coming up with ways to let the public know of voting dates and deadlines so that they are prepared ahead of time to vote.

CLOSED SESSION - PERSONAL MATTER CONCERNING OFFICERS OF ELECTION

Secretary Smith read the motion to hold a closed meeting pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A)(1) of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act to discuss personal matters as it relates to election officers. The Certification of Closed Meeting was read by Secretary Smith according to Section 2.2-3711(A)(1) of the Code of Virginia, all members of the Board signed "yes" to the certification unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chairwoman Cherlyn S. Stevens.

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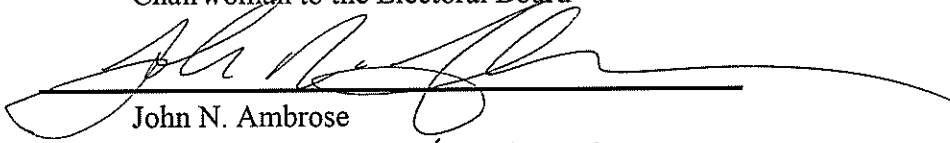
NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting date will be at 2pm on Sunday March 26, 2023 where the electoral board will come into the office for the L&A testing of voting machines that will be used for the Special Election on March 28th, 2023.

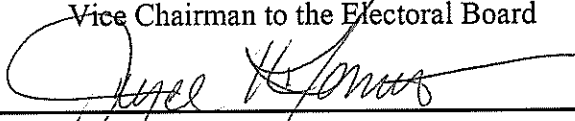
There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned



Cherlyn S. Stevens
Chairwoman to the Electoral Board



John N. Ambrose
Vice Chairman to the Electoral Board



Loyce K. Smith
Secretary to the Electoral Board