

City of Richmond



CHERLYN STARLET STEVENS
CHAIRWOMAN

JOHN N. AMBROSE
VICE-CHAIR

JOYCE KING SMITH
SECRETARY

Electoral Board

Meeting Minutes

August 4th, 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, and Caitlin Shelton, Executive Assistant.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

First, Mr. James J.J. Minor, President of NAACP, who spoke in favor of reopening the two satellite locations.

Second, Ms. Sandra Antoine, member of the public, who spoke in favor of reopening two satellite locations.

Third, Mason Hood, member of the public, who spoke in favor of reopening the two satellite locations.

Fourth, Ms. Rosalind Gibson, member of the public, who signed up but did not show up for commentary.

Fifth, delegate Rodney Will, who represents the 73rd district, who spoke in favor of reopening the two satellite locations.

Sixth, Ms. Catherine Jordan, who represents the 2nd district on City Council, who spoke in favor of reopening the two satellite locations.

Seventh, Michael Jones, President of Richmond City Council, who spoke in favor of reopening the two satellite locations.

Lastly, delegate Rae Cousins, who represents the 79th district, who spoke in favor of reopening the two satellite locations.

DISCUSSION REGARDING SATELLITE VOTING LOCATIONS IN THE CITY OF RICHMOND

Chairwoman Stevens starts this discussion with a statement she prepared. "Over the past two years, I have engaged in many conversations with our Registrar Keith Balmer regarding our two satellite voting locations. During these conversations, we discussed the amount of money it costs to operate these two locations during the early voting period. After each election, we review the total turnout at the two satellites and compare these numbers to the amount of money we spend on staffing. Therefore, our vote last week to not open the satellite voting locations was due to budgetary concerns. The cost is astronomical when you look at how many voters are coming in to vote versus what the City of Richmond is spending. For instance, during last November's election, the total turnout at our two satellites was 2,844 voters over the course of 45 days of Early Voting. The amount of money that we spent on those two satellites was \$100,000. I will emphatically state that this was not done to suppress any other voters in the City of Richmond. The Electoral board believes that every eligible voter has the right to cast their ballot no matter what part of the city they live in. We are also fully aware that the satellites must be opened for every election during early voting and that it is our decision to determine the days and hours that they will be open. And that's what we're going to do." With that being said, Chairwoman Stevens entertains the motion to reverse the decision from last week's board meeting and to have the two satellite locations open for 45 days for Early Voting. Secretary Smith seconds the motion. All were in favor, **the motion passes** the satellites will be open for 45 days at both locations.

DISCUSSION ON SUNDAY VOTING

To start this topic of discussion, Chairwoman Stevens states that this is one item that the electoral board does have control over. Chairwoman Stevens then proceeds to state that she is opposed to Sunday Voting. Ms. Stevens mentions that five days for voting at three locations around the City is sufficient. Ms. Stevens also states that her decision is based on from looking at the human factor of the Office of Elections staff. Chairwoman Stevens says, "you're talking about people that may be working seven days straight. That's just more than I think that we want to put our people through, these people to me are human beings." With this, Chairwoman Stevens makes a proposal to have no Sunday voting. Vice-Chair Ambrose seconds this proposal. Secretary Smith opposes the proposal. **The motion passes** for no Sunday voting for the upcoming General Election.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

There was no public comment for items not on the agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Chairwoman Cherlyn S. Stevens.

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NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting date will be on Tuesday, September 12th at 10a.m. to discuss the upcoming General Election.

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

Joyce K. Smith
Secretary to the Electoral Board