

LUZERNE COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

AND REGISTRATIONS MEETING MINUTES

LUZERNE COUNTY COURTHOUSE COUNCIL ROOM

MAY 3, 2023

CALL TO ORDER 5:00 PM

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE

ROLL CALL

Alyssa Fusaro yes, Jim Mangan yes, Dan Schramm yes, Audrey Serniak yes,
Denise Williams yes

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Alyssa Fusaro moved to approve 2nd Jim Mangan, unanimous

PUBLIC COMMENTS (3 minutes)

Robin Kochin, Dallas Township-a 6 PM start time will serve the public; misprinting the ballots is a disservice to the public, website requires people navigate hundred of pages to find information they want; Beth McBride said the election to precedence over campaign finance reports but primary was already botched; the Bureau needs to do their job competently; Board shirked their duty by not investigating the paper shortage but pushed it off to an overworked DA's office; Board and Bureau focused on convenience rather than integrity; Luzerne County is successful at voter disenfranchisement and corruption; are we proud of our partisanship and do we even care?

MINUTES

Motion to approve the minutes of April 5, 2023 made by Alyssa Fusaro 2nd Jim Mangan,
unanimous

Motion to approve the minutes of April 19, 2023 made by Dan Schramm 2nd Jim
Mangan,

unanimous

BUREAU OF ELECTIONS REPORT

Lack of Residency on Primary Ballots-Eryn Harvey said that there will be notices posted at the polls, advertised in the newspaper and on the county website; decided against mailing letter to voters as confusing since the ballots are being received; does the Board want to send emails?

Board decided to send the emails

Alyssa Fusaro moved to affirm the Bureau send emails to the voters where possible making them aware of the residency mistake issue where impacted 2nd Jim Mangan

Jim Mangan yes, Dan Schramm yes, Audrey Serniak yes, Alyssa Fusaro yes,

Denise Williams yes, motion passes

Eryn Harvey advised the cost incurred by the error is minimal, newspaper ads and posters at the polls, quote for mailing is about \$15,000

Denise Williams-will the counties with multi-county school boards be contacted?

Eryn Harvey-they didn't put the residency on the ballots; finds a lot of counties don't list residency for judges or school boards

Paula Radick-multi-county races should include the candidate's county

Alyssa Fusaro-suggest contacting impacted counties

Eryn Harvey-can't tell other counties what to do

Paula Radick-only Department of State can tell another county what to do

Denise Williams-inform them so that it won't come back at us

Paula Radick-worry about Luzerne County

Denise Williams-who proofs the ballot?

Eryn Harvey-everyone in Bureau leaderships proofs it; Dominion provides checklists but doesn't proof; the Office of Law doesn't review it; Department of State receives the samples

Beth McBride-Dept of State corrected title of one judges race, nothing on residency

Denise Williams-is proofing a Board responsibility? Board doesn't receive checklists or candidate petitions

Eryn Harvey-why does the Board approve the ballot?

Denise Williams-if we need to proof we need more information; Dominion checklists are not adequate

Eryn Harvey-ballots are on the website, notified candidates to sign off; not helpful to be told this after the mail-ins went out; need to know sooner rather than later

Alyssa Fusaro-other counties dropped residency off and others followed suit; send emails ASAP

Eryn Harvey-will send emails tomorrow morning

Denise Williams-candidates and the public not required to proof the ballot; thanked Mr. Holly for informing the Board

Alyssa Fusaro-another step towards election integrity; mistakes and challenges leading to making things good

Denise Williams-will put an updated SOP for ballot proofing on the agenda for August

Jim Mangan-other counties are not following the law; disappointed that the Department of State

didn't step up; higher level of guidance needed; currently not sufficient

Primary Election Update-Eryn Harvey-doing pretty well with poll workers; thanked the media for their help in recruiting; poll book training is taking place; privacy screens have been delivered; mailing ballots began last week, dropped from Lehigh Valley and people have started using the drop boxes

Jim Mangan-how often are the ballots picked up from the drop boxes and is there a schedule required by law; concerned because sheriff department resources are stretched

Beth McBride-pick ups are Tuesday and Thursday

Denise Williams requested a list of poll workers, Bureau will send

Walking or street lists are sent as a back up to the electronic poll books

Regarding the election day phone bank-it will be the same due to poor cell phone reception; JoEs have administrative assistant's extensions

Jen Pecora-will look into a cell phone booster; advised it is \$40/month/phone for use on 2-3 days per year; have adequate staff and phones

Beth McBride-JoEs need to call there assigned admin assistant first and then try other lines

Denise Williams-regarding overvotes, the scanner holds and the voter can either reject the ballot, spoil and redo, or can choose to cast it as is; ambiguous marks-can the voter cast anyway? What happens if there is a power outage and the ballots need to be scanned in later?

Eryn Harvey-Bureau will check on ambiguously marked ballots/emergency

Paula Radick-secrecy folders are required for privacy

Eryn Harvey-Bureau will be sending them out

Dan Schramm-questioned how the ballots would be accounted for because there are Republican and Democratic ballots; believes not accounting somehow for different parties will make reconciliation difficult

Eryn Harvey advised they know how many ballots are going out and how many returned; there

is a separate reconciliation process for provisional ballots

Election Integrity Grant-Due June 30th; total \$497,015.74; using about \$104,600 on warehouse security, \$65,000 on election day ballot printing; also mail in ballot printing and poll worker pay; about \$126,000 remaining

Alyssa Fusaro requested a breakdown of the warehouse expenses; Eryn Harvey will send

Denise Williams requested the blank form for reconciliation; Eryn Harvey will send when she receives it

Pre-canvassing Room-Eryn Harvey-reported that the furniture is being delivered tomorrow; the configuration will be similar to Court Room A; there will be a floor plan

Dan Schramm-any cabling needed? answer-all done and tested; suggests a cover for the gap between the elevator and floor be obtained to make transporting the ballot cages easier

Jim Mangan-will the SURE system be available? Answer-SURE no, Dominion links yes

Alyssa Fusaro-can Zoom capability be set up? Can EIG be use for that

Jen Pecora-will check into that

BOARD OF ELECTIONS REPORT

Meeting Start Time Change from 5 to 6 PM-Denise Williams reported she emailed the Acting Manager but hasn't heard back

Jen Pecora-at a standstill; will follow up

Memorandum Regarding Board Signatures-Denise Williams reported that Acting Manager Swetz prefers, since a Manager will soon be hired, to let the new Manager settle this; strides in communication have been made; likes the memorandum

Will put this on the agenda for the next regular meeting

Bureau Leadership Presence at Meetings-Denise Williams stated that we need a Bureau presence for the entire meeting not just the Bureau part of the agenda

Alyssa Fusaro was advised that Beth McBride is the Board clerk; requested Emily Cook's presence for the 3 meetings prior to the election, expertise to answer certain questions

Denise Williams-agrees that the operations manager should be at meetings prior to the elections, has answers to questions about operations

Jim Mangan-integrate questions or switch the Board/Bureau sections on the agenda

Denise Williams-Bureau has been present for full meetings in the past, with one exception; Board's role not just for the Bureau but for the public as well

Jen Pecora-no problem with that but need mutual respect; this is the Board's meeting; last meeting was demoralizing

Denise Williams-respect goes both ways

Jen Pecora-wants to work together to produce a successful election; Bureau working hard

Alyssa Fusaro-work for the public, when things go awry the finger pointing comes to us; need to hold the Board and Bureau accountable; respect given and returned; we all have issues

Denise Williams-we are berated but we don't walk out; we go through it; need a physical presence of Board members and others at meetings

Processing JoE Bags-Alyssa Fusaro-last election observed the processing of the JoE bags; saw provisional attestation envelopes and walking lists thrown in the trash; public information but must be requested, should not be thrown away but should be shredded; Board members should be present for JoE bag processing so that everyone feels more comfortable

Jen Pecora-will shred if we want

Audrey Serniak-thought that Bureau had agreed to shredding this info at a prior meeting

Denise Williams, Jim Morgan, Dan Schramm-shred

Jen Pecora-can instruct to shred info; not a hassle or difficult to do

Denise Williams-concerned that 3 members present is a public meeting; if Board members think this is necessary, they can observe; doesn't feel it's necessary for her to be there; pre-canvassing and canvassing deals with counting ballots, this is Bureau processing, everyday duties

Alyssa Fusaro-good for us to be involved; wants someone else to be there to witness the process

When Does the Board Need to Vote-Paula Radick-County Council is the legislative body, the Board is not; the Board can vote on issues that are within our power; case by case basis; Office of Law would have to advise

Signs at Polling Places-Jim Mangan-timely removal of signs is an issue

Denise Williams-consistency, are there non-profits or churches that don't allow, can they be listed on the website; doesn't see any conflict of interest for them

Beth McBride-no polling places has indicated they are prohibiting political signs

Alyssa Fusaro-need to refer polling place contracts to Council with specifics on what need to be revamped

PUBLIC COMMENTS (3 minutes)

Bob Caruso-regarding signs- need to follow the law and allow posting, we pay rent; inform the DA; how many times has the Bureau signed for the Board? Other courtroom was used once before and was too small; 10 year anniversary of the Hazleton school district revote scandal; we find from that the people responsible are the people responsible

Allen Heninger, Dallas Township, JoE-Signs? Is the 10 ft rule in effect? Who gets to remove the signs?; satisfied and gratified by the depth of issues and debate; feels very secure; appreciates Alyssa Fusaro's discussion of JoE bags, finds enlightening; appreciates she took the time to observe and address; regarding the Bureau, found it interesting that he has a specific assigned administrative assistant to call; requests that this be included in JoE training (Beth McBride advised him to call the office for his administrative assistant; A.H.-his contact was a rover in the last election; needs to be clarified in training)

Susan Palmer, Wilkes Barre City, Ward 18-how many emergency and provisional ballots will they get?

Jen Pecora-enough for each registered voter in each precinct, there are no emergency ballots since using paper, 50 Democrat and 50 Republican provisional ballots will be provided

Will the number of ballots on the tally sheet match the number of ballots sent out? These numbers didn't match last election; at Ward 18 everything that was received went back in the bag

Ronald Knapp, Nanticoke-happy JoEs are attending meeting; how often are the voter rolls purged?; Alyssa Fusaro-every single cycle; ambiguous marks are only time ballots rejected; would like the poll watcher certificates published next week and not at the last minute; asks the press to publicize need to correct overvotes

Joseph McCabe, Laflin-didn't have a successful election last time; need to move heaven and hell to have a successful election this time; all people including Bureau should be at meetings; how often are voter rolls purged, Beth McBride-purged according to the statute

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Alyssa Fusaro 2nd Danny Schramm; unanimous

ADJOURNED 7:15 PM