



BOARD OF ELECTIONS MINUTES

Tuesday, August 4, 2020, 11:00 A.M.

Willowbank Office Building
420 Holmes Street, Room 146
Bellefonte, PA 16823

I. CALL TO ORDER

The public meeting of the Centre County Board of Elections was convened at 11:02 AM by Chair of the Board of Elections, Commissioner Steven Dershem.

In attendance were Commissioner Michael Pipe, Commissioner Mark Higgins, Commissioner Steven Dershem, Administrator Margaret Gray, Director of Elections Joyce McKinley, Elections Coordinator Jodi Nedd, Voter Registration Latisha Stefanko and Executive Office Supervisor Natalie Smith.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments received from the public.

III. MINUTES

On a motion by Commissioner Pipe, seconded by Commissioner Higgins, the Board voted unanimously to approve minutes of the Board of Elections Meeting held on Tuesday, July 14.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Pre-Paid Postage for Mail-In and Absentee Ballots for the 2020 General Election

Director of Elections Joyce McKinley reported that last week Governor Wolf approved that all ballots to be returned for the 2020 General Election will have pre-paid postage. The Department of State will obtain a permit that counties can use. The envelope for the fall has also changed and the County will need to have new envelopes printed. Joyce recommended that the county obtain its own permit from the postal service because once this is done it will set a precedent for future elections. At this time, the State owns the pre-paid postage process and Commissioner Dershem would prefer that they continue to organize and make the arrangements instead of the county. The process will probably be changed before the 2021 Primary and would then need to be reworked so the County should not invest too much time or money at this point. Commissioner Pipe asked that the Election Office keep the Board updated on the status of the envelope design and agreed that in 2021 the Board can take another look at the pre-paid postage.

Joyce asked the Board about having a mail house process the distribution of absentee and mail-in ballots for the fall. Commissioner Pipe asked that the Election Office provide a list of vendors approved or recommended by the Department of State. There are other counties that used a mail house for the Primary and she will

ask them for recommendations. A decision will need to be made within the coming weeks, if the county chooses to use a mail house this will affect other operations, such as ordering envelopes. Commissioner Pipe would like this to be reviewed by the Solicitor. It was the consensus of the Board that Joyce come back and recommend a reputable vendor that is endorsed by other counties, preferably a member of COSTARS, and the Board will have a virtual introductory meeting before taking final action.

B. Election Equipment

Joyce asked the Board to consider the purchase of two additional joggers for processing on Election Day. Commissioner Pipe agreed and suggested that this be increased to three. Joyce also provided a description of shelving to hold trays. The Board agreed to order one shelf so it can be seen before considering additional units. On a motion by Commissioner Pipe, seconded by Commissioner Higgins, the Board voted unanimously to approve the purchase of three joggers and one shelf.

Latisha asked the Board about making arrangements with Pitney Bowes for technical support on Election Day. Commissioner Pipe felt there would be more of a need at the start of the week when the initial process begins. The actual date for onsite support would be dependent on the legislature and guidance from the Department of State regarding when the count is permitted to start. Commissioner Dershem requested that the Election Office make a list of the assistance that may be needed and provide a recommendation at the next Board of Election meeting.

The Board discussed counting ballots off site, which is tentatively set to take place at the Penn Stater. In accordance with Act 77, Joyce said the processing must be completed in the county seat, which is Bellefonte. The Board has until August 20 to enter into a contract with the Penn Stater. Commissioner Pipe has communicated with the Department of State asking for clarification and Margaret will ask Solicitor Betsy Dupuis to review Act 77.

V. OLD BUSINESS

Debriefing of the Primary Election

Commissioner Pipe discussed posting an application on the county website for workers to apply. The application has the option for applicants to provide their availability from Sunday, November 1 through Wednesday November 4. Applicants must also provide their contact information and confirmation that they are registered to vote in Centre County. Once applications are received the county can begin to offer trainings. All applications from the website will automatically be compiled into a spreadsheet. It was the consensus of the Board to make the application go live.

VI. ACTION ITEMS

VII. ELECTION ANNOUNCEMENTS

Monday, August 10, 2020

Last day to withdrawal by candidates nominated by nomination papers.

Last day for withdrawal by candidates nominated at the primary.

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Monday, October 19, 2020

Last day to REGISTER before the November election.

Tuesday, October 27, 2020

Last day to apply for a mail-in or civilian absentee ballot.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Commissioner Pipe, seconded by Commissioner Higgins, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 11:55 AM.

Respectfully submitted:

Natalie Smith
Executive Office Supervisor