

ELECTION BOARD
September 28, 2020

Present at the meeting were:

Gary Eby
Brenda Watson
Patti McLaughlin
Bill Bunt
Bonnie Delancey
Shannon Hines

Present from the Public via Phone: Karen Anderson, Alane Balchunas, Evelyn D’Elia, Ann Miller, Cindy Roney, and Melanie Wertz

The Election Board met on Monday, September 28, 2020 at 11:30 a.m. The meeting was conducted via telephone conference and in person in the Commissioners’ Conference Room. The meeting was recorded by the County and Melanie Wertz.

Commissioner Eby stated that he was updating the order of the meeting to allow for public comments after the Election Litigation Update as it may result in additional comments.

Approval of the Minutes: Patti McLaughlin made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 21, 2020 meeting. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Meeting Business: Election Litigation Update: Solicitor Bunt stated that on Saturday he had received communication from the legal counsel representing the County in the Democratic and Republican lawsuits. In the communication, he was informed that Federal Court is accepting the decisions made by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court on many issues. Solicitor Bunt stated that additional guidance is required from the County on the following issues:

- Signature comparisons – He asked if the County wants the responsibility of comparing the signatures on the application for a ballot to that of the return ballot envelope. Solicitor Bunt stated that the Secretary of the Commonwealth’s does not recommend signature comparisons by counties.
- Drop boxes – Solicitor Bunt stated, that if the County decides to have drop boxes, they must provide information on how the boxes will be properly monitored, placed, and maintained.
- Poll watchers – He stated that the past practice of the County had been that a poll watcher must be a resident of the County. Solicitor Bunt said he needed to know what Perry County’s position is on poll watchers and residency. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court decision stated that poll watchers must be a resident of the County in which they watch the polls, but the Federal Court is still considering this.

Solicitor Bunt provided a Guidance Concerning Civilian Absentee and Mail-In Ballot Procedures document that had just been received. He stated that the guidance had not been fully read at the time of the meeting, but he said that Ms. Wertz’s previous question regarding who can return mail-in ballots was addressed in the document. Solicitor Bunt read paragraph 4.1 which stated: A voter must return his or her own completed absentee or mail-in ballot by 8:00 p.m. on Election

Day to the county board of elections or other county-designated drop-off location. Third-party delivery of absentee or mail-in ballots is not permitted, and any ballots delivered by someone other than the voter are required to be set aside. The only exceptions are voters with a disability who have designated in writing an agent to deliver their ballot for them. Agency forms may be found at VotesPA.com. Emergency absentee ballots also may be delivered by a designated agent.

Solicitor Bunt said it seemed like new information was coming in weekly and there may be updates next week.

Public Comments: Alane Balchunas asked if ballots were ready to go to the printer or not? She also asked if there was an estimated time regarding printing and if more than one fifty cent postage stamp would be required on the ballots. Ms. Balchunas stated that since there was only one stamp required to return a ballot, there would be less confusion.

Ann Miller thanked the Election Board and Bonnie Delancey and staff, for the hard work being put into the upcoming election. She stated that it is important to have drop boxes, and recommended having one in Ms. Delancey's office. She said having boxes in a secure place or two is the future of voting and Perry County should be forward thinking in this matter.

Karen Anderson questioned if any of the members of the Election Board ever served a position in their political party. She stated that she has an issue with Patti McLaughlin being a member of the Election Board, as she is the Vice Chair of the Perry County Republican Committee. Ms. Anderson stated this is a conflict of interest and could be a legal issue. She asked if she would see a proof of the ballot prior to printing. Ms. Anderson questioned who the volunteers will be that will be accepting ballots, as she did not understand why there was a difference between someone dropping off a ballot for someone else, when a third party will accept a ballot and provide it to Bonnie Delancey's office. She also voiced concerns regarding the party affiliations of the volunteers, and questioned if they would be volunteers selected by committee members of each party or selected in some other way.

Melanie Wertz seconded Karen Anderson's questions and stated that she has great concern with what happens to her ballot when she brings it in to the Election Office as she does not trust the post office. She said she wants to hand her ballot in to proper representation and wants it recorded and documented safely.

Meeting Business: Ballot Drop Boxes: Commissioner Watson stated that she did not see how a drop box would be more secure than providing extended hours for ballot drop off at the Veterans Memorial Building and would be less expensive. Commissioner Watson made a motion to not offer drop boxes, but instead offer extended hours for ballot drop off at the Veterans Memorial Building. Patti McLaughlin seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Poll Watchers: Patti McLaughlin made a motion that poll watchers in Perry County are required to be a resident of Perry County. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Signature Comparisons: Patti McLaughlin made a motion to not review and challenge signatures due to the lack of knowledge on signature comparisons and multiple people being part of the process. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. Commissioner Eby questioned what if the signature is obviously different. Commissioner Watson questioned how do you know what is

obviously different. Patti McLaughlin also stated that the volunteers assisting during the election are not trained to compare signatures. All agreed. Motion carried.

Alane Balchunas asked for clarification on the vote of the signature comparison issue and stated it was a wise decision.

Reviewing Ballot Proof Prior to Printing: Commissioner Watson made a motion that the request for a prior opportunity to view ballot before ordering them be denied. Patti McLaughlin seconded the motion. Bonnie Delancey stated that she had reached out to the State Bureau of Elections and was told that no one should be looking at the draft ballots prior to printing. She did say that the specimen ballots can be viewed. Commissioner Eby asked for clarification on the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Extended Hours: Commissioner Watson provided the following schedule of extended hours for ballot drop off at the Veterans Memorial Building:

October 19th – 6:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.
4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

October 21st - 6:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.
4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

October 23rd - 6:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.
4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

October 24th - 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

October 26th - 6:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.
4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

October 28th - 6:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.
4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

October 30th - 6:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.
4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

October 31st – 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

November 2nd - 6:30 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.

Commissioner Watson made a motion to accept the extended hours schedule for ballot drop off as presented. Patti McLaughlin seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Commissioner Eby asked who will be considered to work the extended hours. Bonnie stated that she has received phone calls regarding volunteering during the upcoming election and is also receiving internet forms from interested individuals. She said that she is looking up party affiliations of the individuals and compiling a list of possible volunteers with names, addresses, municipalities, etc. Ms. Delancey said that the listing will be brought before the Election Board for consideration. She asked for a listing of volunteers from Ms. Wertz. Solicitor Bunt stated that in the past there has always been equal party representation and encouraged that in the

future. He suggested tabling the issue to review the listing and make a decision at a future meeting. Patti McLaughlin stated that she had seen information online from Governor Wolf regarding volunteers and would share the webpage. Commissioner Eby stated that there needs to be rules and procedures established before choosing volunteers, such as the number of individuals needed, whether shifts can be split, substitute listings etc.

Public Comments: Alane Balchunas said she did not hear the extended hours, but hoped that they would be posted online soon so that she can bring her ballot to the Veterans Memorial Building. She stated that after November 3rd there are no additional hours being accepted regarding the mail-in ballots. She questioned what will happen with those ballots that come in after November 3rd. Ms. Balchunas questioned whom will be processing and counting the ballots on Election Day. She stated that time is running out to make decisions and questioned when she would receive her mail-in ballot. She stated that she no longer has confidence in the United States Postal Service.

Evelyn D'Elia questioned if a name is misspelled, if the ballot would be thrown out. She stated that her last name is often misspelled and wanted to ensure misspellings do not result in a ballot being discarded.

Karen Anderson questioned whom Bonnie Delancey spoke to at the Department of State regarding the viewing of the ballot prior to printing, as other counties are allowing the Democrats to view the ballot proofs. She stated that approved Democratic Committee members had been utilized in the past for elections and this practice should continue to be followed to provide a level of trust. Ms. Anderson stated that there is not a Democratic Committee approved Democrat on the Election Board, but there is a Republican office holder on the Board. She stated that this is a glaring problem and would speak with the state legal group for further guidance. She said that that Election Board Member should remove herself from the Board. She stated that ballots can be delivered to Bonnie Delancey's Office on Election Day, but reminded the Board to keep in mind that Bonnie would be extremely busy. Ms. Anderson asked if there were any comments from the Board on the issue, she raised regarding the Board Member. She said that there is not a practicing Democrat on the Board and that this can affect the trust people have in the Board.

Melanie Wertz stated that she is the Vice Chair of the Perry County Democratic Committee and had always been asked in the past for volunteers. She commented that she has a listing of volunteers and had been waiting to hear from Bonnie regarding the need for volunteers to help in the upcoming election. Ms. Wertz stated that the volunteers should be active Committee members. She said there is a great distrust in the County due to the fact that there are fake Democrats not representing the interests of the Democratic Party. She commented that she wants to work with Bonnie to get Committee members on the volunteer listing.

Cindy Roney questioned Bonnie Delancey on whether she knew about the website previously and questioned why she did not know about it. She asked if there are security cameras in Bonnie Delancey's Office showing who brings in a ballot.

Ann Miller asked what the security measures would be during the extended ballot drop off hours at the Veterans Memorial Building. She stated that someone could drop off someone else's ballot if the person accepting the ballot does not know who they are, which goes against the Commonwealth guidance. Ms. Miller commented that she signs it at the polling location and they compare signatures there.

Melanie Wertz stated that the process has completely changed from the past. She said she had always been asked and provided a listing of Committee approved volunteers. She commented that she will be providing a list and hoped that she could work with the County. Ms. Wertz stated that there is no level of trust but reiterated that she wants to cooperate with the County and hoped that Committee members would be used as volunteers.

Patti McLaughlin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion.

The next Election Board meeting is scheduled for October 5, 2020 at 11:30 a.m. in the Commissioners' Meeting Room.