

ELECTION BOARD
October 5, 2020

Present at the meeting were:

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

Present from the Public via Phone: Alane Balchunas, Donna Cohick, Gene Cohick, Ann Miller, and Cindy Roney

The Election Board met on Monday, October 5, 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.

Public Comments: Alane Balchunas commented on the theft of Biden/Harris campaign signs. She also recommended that a member of the Election Board make a motion that an announcement be posted on the County website stating that Perry County Officials of both parties, strongly condemn the thefts as unlawful and punishable by law and are not representative of any political parties in Perry County.

Ann Miller commented on the process to become a poll worker and stated that she had gone onto the Department of State website for additional information. She asked how the 36 individuals on the listing Bonnie Delancey had were recruited. Ms. Miller stated that she found the online interest form to volunteer during the election and that it could only be submitted electronically. She also questioned if there had been advertising on how to volunteer during the election. Ms. Miller stated that there is still time to advertise for volunteers and urged the Board to advertise. She questioned if volunteers were recruited electronically during previous elections.

Approval of the Minutes: Patti McLaughlin made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 28, 2020 meeting. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Meeting Business: Election Litigation Update: Solicitor Bunt stated that there have been no major changes to the two lawsuits since the last Election Board meeting.

He provided information on the following information to the Board:

- Patti McLaughlin's appointment to the Election Board – Solicitor Bunt stated that Ms. McLaughlin's appointment to the Election Board was done through a judicial appointment and if someone wants to challenge the issue, they should do that through a court action.
- Election Volunteers – Solicitor Bunt stated that past practice has been to have election day volunteers provided by the party chairs and he recommended that practice continue. As for the extended hours for ballot drop off, he recommended that a volunteer from each political party serve during those hours and that those volunteers be pulled from the

listing provided by the Department of State and by individuals that have been in contact with the Election Office. He commented that the Election Board will need to discuss the specific process for accepting ballots during the extended hours

Election Volunteers: Commissioner Eby commented that election day volunteers should continue to be recruited following the past practice of having the Republican and Democrat party chairs designate the volunteers.

Discussion occurred regarding the listing compiled from the Department of State and through directly providing information to the Election Office. Commissioner Watson stated that Republican and Democrat volunteers should be randomly selected from the listing and then be contacted to fill a time slot during the extended hours. She also said that alternates need to be randomly selected as well in case a volunteer is unable to fill the shift. Commissioner Eby confirmed that there should be two alternates, one from each party, so that the volunteers that does not show can be replaced by someone from the same political party. Commissioner Watson made a motion to follow the random selection process discussed, to include alternates, and that it become part of the regular election policy. Patti McLaughlin seconded the motion. Commissioner Eby confirmed that the policy would entail selecting, from a lottery of volunteers, individuals to work during the extended hours for ballot drop off into a locked box. He stated that the policy would also include alternates should someone be unable to fill his/her shift. Commissioner Eby also commented that the volunteers would be equally represented by a Republican and a Democrat. All agreed. Motion carried.

Commissioner Eby stated that the scheduling of volunteers would be worked out. He also commented that the locked ballot box should be under surveillance during the extended hours and questioned where the box could be placed. He suggested placing the box in the lobby outside the Treasurer's Office as it would be under surveillance and stated that only the exterior door at that entrance be open during the extended hours. Commissioner Eby stated that the two volunteers would witness the ballot being dropped into the locked box by the voter, and would not touch the ballot. He said that the box could be locked in the Election Office at the end of the shift and the two volunteers could witness the box being locked in the office.

Polling Locations: Discussion occurred regarding moving the polling locations in Newport Borough, Oliver Township, and Tuscarora Township. Bonnie Delancey stated that she and Commissioner Watson visited the proposed locations and they are suitable. Solicitor Bunt stated that the current leases run through 2021. He stated that both the Newport Borough and Oliver Township location changes would be for three elections through the end of the lease in 2021. Commissioner Eby stated that Tuscarora Township has proposed to make improvements to their township building to make it more suitable for elections, but is not willing to give up the rent for being a polling location. For this reason, he said if the move is approved, Tuscarora Township's polling location change would be for one election only.

Patti McLaughlin made a motion to move the polling location in Newport Borough from the Water Authority to the Newport Citizens Fire Company on Mulberry Street. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Patti McLaughlin made a motion to move the polling location in Oliver Township from the township building to the Church of God in East Newport. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Patti McLaughlin made a motion to move the polling location in Tuscarora Township from the township building to the Donnelley's Mills Methodist Church on Raccoon Valley Road, for the upcoming election only. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Public Comments: Alane Balchunas stated that she was very concerned with the changes to the three polling locations less than a month before the election. She questioned how this would be communicated to residents and voiced concerns that individuals would not be aware of the location changes. She also stated that no one took her up on her suggestion to post on the website information condemning the theft of Biden/Harris campaign signs, as well as all campaign signs. Ms. Balchunas stated that these unlawful actions should be condemned.

Ann Miller stated that she now realized that there will be a locked box in the Veterans Memorial Building and said it was a good thing. She stated that she had read information dated 7/31/2020 on a Department of State communication, that postage paid return envelopes would be provided for mail-in and absentee ballots. She asked if the County was aware of this and questioned why the County did not accept the paid postage. Ms. Miller asked if ballots can be dropped off outside of the extended hours to the Election Office. She asked if the masking requirements would apply to the polling locations. Ms. Miller also reiterated that advertisements should go out on how to be a poll worker.

Alane Balchunas asked if the specimen ballot had been returned to the County and also questioned when ballots would be received by voters. She asked what the turnaround time was from the time the ballots are received from the printer to when ballots are mailed out to voters. Ms. Balchunas stated that she was glad to hear that the ballots were approved by the Department of State prior to being sent to the printer. She asked if the ballots come back addressed and put together with the secrecy envelope etc. She questioned how long it would take to prepare the ballots once received from the printer and then get them mailed out. Ms. Balchunas again questioned when the ballots would be mailed out to voters and voiced her concerns regarding the late date of ballots being mailed out.

Ann Miller commented that ballots can be dropped off or mailed via the post office. She stated that during the primary election she took her ballot to the New Bloomfield post office but there was no box for local mail. She said that she was not sure what happened to the ballot once it was handed to the clerk at the post office. Ms. Miller stated that the ballots go to an out of town distribution center.

Cindy Roney said that since masks will not be enforced at the polling locations, the poll workers are assuming the risk. She questioned if any poll workers had backed out and said someone should enforce the masking rules at the polling locations. She commented on the possibility of poll watchers being at the polling locations. Ms. Roney also asked if the list of volunteers provided by Melanie Wertz would be considered as volunteers, or should she complete the online form.

Ann Miller stated that on the Department of State's website, PPE will be or could be provided to the polling locations.

Donna Cohick thanked the Board for moving the polling location in Newport Borough. She also thanked the Board for the hard work they are doing during the current circumstances and said the Election Office has always been very helpful to her.

Patti McLaughlin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

The next Election Board meeting is scheduled for October 12, 2020 at 11:30 a.m. in the Commissioners' Meeting Room.