

ELECTION BOARD
October 7, 2024

Present at the meeting were:

Brenda Watson
R. Franklin Campbell
Bill Bunt
Sarah Geesaman
Shannon Hines

Present from the Public: Andrew Burke, Jeff Garman, Kathy Garman, Jerry Philpott, David Pundock, Jake Sternberger, Ashley Weaver

The Election Board met on Monday, October 7, 2024 at 11:00 a.m. The meeting was conducted virtually via WebEx video/telephone conference and in person in the Commissioners' Conference Room. The meeting was recorded by the County.

Public Comments: Kathy Garman said that during the Election Education Forum it was her understanding that the question was answered that ballots should not be in the office of anyone running for office. She asked how the ballots ended up in an incumbent's office during the 2022 election and remained there until the election was verified. Solicitor Bunt stated that the matter was referred to the Attorney General's Office and questions should be directed to that office. Ms. Garman asked what steps are being taken to prevent it from happening again. Solicitor Bunt reiterated that the matter should be addressed to the Attorney General.

Meeting Business: Commissioner Campbell made a motion to approve the minutes from the September 23, 2024 meeting. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Commissioner Watson stated that at the Election Education Forum on September 26th a question was asked regarding Microsoft and the County's election equipment. She said that after further investigation, certain election equipment does run on Microsoft Window operating system. She commented that another question was asked about any impact to the election system due to the Microsoft/CrowdStrike caused outage. Commissioner Watson stated that Perry County's election system was not impacted. She further said that the equipment does run on the Microsoft Windows platform, it is not connected to the internet.

Sarah Geesaman, Election Director, stated that ballots were received on October 1st and ballots began to go out in the mail on October 2nd. She thanked all the helpers in her office for getting the ballots out and noted that the mass mailing of ballots should be completed that day.

Ms. Geesaman said a question was asked about precanvassing. She commented that the precanvas will be held in the Cooperative Extension conference room. She stated that there will be a larger team conducting the precanvas, so she got a larger room to accommodate this.

Sarah Geesaman commented that they just received their first round of ballots in the mail and received 67. Due to the large volume of walk-in customers and phone calls, she asked that people be patient as ballots continue to go out each day.

Ms. Geesaman said she thought the Election Education Forum went well and said a lot of information was covered. She commented that she appreciated the Election Board's help at the event.

Commissioner Watson asked if there would be any Saturday or evening hour drop off dates. Ms. Geesaman said she has no problem with accommodating this and said she would talk with her Deputy and get back to the Board with dates.

Solicitor Bunt stated that the Supreme Court ruled on Saturday that they will not take jurisdiction on the cases regarding curing or dating of ballots. He said that based on this information he believes that dates will need to be on the mail in/absentee ballots and it is up to each county regarding curing, but noted he is awaiting guidance from the Department of State. Solicitor Bunt commented that it was reported online that the Supreme Court will hear the appeal regarding a specific County and the curing of ballots, but again said he was awaiting information from the Department of State.

Commissioner Watson thanked Ms. Geesaman and her team for all their hard work. She said she stopped in several times and said they are doing a great job.

Solicitor Bunt complimented Ms. Geesaman and her team for their presentation at the Election Education Forum and said Perry County may have been the only county to do this type of presentation in the state.

Commissioner Watson commented that many people do not realize the amount of work that goes into the election. She said several of the helpers did not know all the work entailed in running an election until they started to help. She stated that Ms. Geesaman is doing a great job and noted that while she is her best friend, she is also an employee and she could not have asked for a better staff member.

Commissioner Campbell reiterated the good work being done by the election staff.

Public Comments: David Pundock asked what Perry County's position is on curing ballots. Solicitor Bunt stated we do not cure ballots.

Commissioner Campbell made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Watson seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.