

ELECTION BOARD

October 28, 2024

Present at the meeting were:

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

Present from the Public: Noah Cline, Jeff Garman, Jerry Philpott, Dave Pundock, Faith Pundock, Larry Reisinger, Jake Sternberger

The Election Board met on Monday, October 28, 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.

Commissioner Watson stated that last week, news agencies reported that Lancaster County was the alleged victim of fraudulent receipt of voter registration applications. She further said that based upon the information provided by the Perry County Election Office, we are not aware of having received fraudulent registration applications in Perry County. Commissioner Watson commented that verification of registration applications received in batches did not evidence fraud either.

Public Comments: Dave Pundock asked how printed ballots are accounted for to address fraud. Sarah Geesaman explained that each precinct received a number of ballots based on their number of registered voters. She further said that a count of ballots is maintained as ballots are used. He said he received a ballot for the wrong precinct. Ms. Geesaman apologized and asked that he come to her office.

Megan Sellers asked what the name of the form is for ballot pick up. She asked if the County is using the Department of State form. Ms. Geesaman stated that the County uses their own document. Ms. Sellers questioned if the people picking up ballots have signed a declaration to do so with integrity. Ms. Geesaman explained that the only drop box is in the Election office and her staff handle them. She further said the individuals transporting ballots from the post office are County employees. Ms. Sellers asked again if the individuals had signed a form regarding handling ballots with integrity. She further questioned how much of the Department of State's guidance the County adhered to. Ms. Sellers asked if there was a meeting on an emergency plan should there be a cyber attack. Solicitor Bunt said yes. Lastly, she asked if there was a guarantee she would have access to voting machines on election day. Solicitor Bunt said he cannot guarantee this as he does not know what the emergency could be and said there are plans to provide for emergencies.

Meeting Business: Commissioner Campbell made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 21, 2024 meeting. Commissioner Lyons seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Kathy Garman asked if the meeting was being offered virtually. Commissioner Watson stated that Ms. Garman was not in her seat during public comment and further said the election is an important topic for the entire County and is offered virtually.

Jake Sternberger thanked the Board for their work.

Sarah Geesaman, Election Director, said poll training was well attended and there was good discussion.

Ms. Geesaman provided the following ballot figures to date:

- 5,283 mail-in/absentee ballots had been mailed out or processed over the counter
- 3,843 ballots had been returned

Sarah Geesaman said October 29th was the last day to apply for a mail-in or absentee ballot until 5:00 p.m.

Ms. Geesaman stated that the Election Office is extremely busy with on demand voting and an additional voting table was set up to accommodate voters.

Solicitor Bunt commented on the Pennsylvania Supreme Court decision regarding Butler County. He said they ruled that if a ballot is not counted for some reason the voter may provisionally vote at the polls on election day. He further said the provisional ballot will be used if the other ballot is determined to be a nullity.

Commissioner Campbell thanked the Election staff for all their hard work.

Commissioner Lyons echoed Commissioner Campbell's comments.

Public Comments: Faith Pundock said she discovered last night that she and her husband received the wrong municipal ballots. She asked if there was a way to check on whether other voters received the wrong municipal ballot. She further questioned if the address label number coincides with a specific district. Ms. Geesaman explained that the numbers are not in numerical order as they are determined by the SURE system. She said the municipal error was human error.

Dave Pundock said hand counting is more accurate and there are witnesses and checks and balances.

Kathy Garman agreed that hand counting is more accurate.

Megan Sellers also agreed with the comments on hand counting being more accurate. She commented that there are counties in the Country that do hand counting. She said that she is trying to get to the bottom of the ballots in a Commissioner's office but found there is no requirement for a chain of custody. She stated that both the Republicans and the Democrats left a huge loop hole when they passed Act 77 when they did not require a chain of custody. Ms. Sellers stated that the Department of State gives out good advice but the Election Board only does what is required by law. She said she does not believe the elections are safe.

Commissioner Campbell made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Lyons seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 11:17 a.m.