June 22, 2020 PRE GENERAL ELECTION MEETING OF THE DELAWARE COUNTY ELECTION BOARD

PRESENT: Gerald Lawrence, Chairman
                            Jim Byrne
                            Ashley Lunkenheimer
                            J. Manly Parks, Board Solicitor
Also Present: Laureen Hagan, Bureau of Elections
                            Jim Savage, Voting Machine Warehouse

Pledge of Allegiance.

Primary election reflections. Mr. Lawrence shared some observations from the June 2nd primary election experience, including that 140,000 people voted with 75,000 of them voting in-person and the balance voting by mail. Beginning with the 2020 primary election, the state required the use of voting machines utilizing paper ballots to produce permanent paper records. The new systems involved different technology, requiring new procedures to be followed and training for poll workers. Passage of Act 77 in 2019 introduced a notable change by allowing people to vote from home with "no-excuse" mail-in ballots. The record demand for mail-in ballots was very challenging with ballot processing complicated by the covid-19 outbreak and having to rely on using an old state-managed online system that often slowed with so many county election bureaus across Pennsylvania logged on at once. Given the high demand and operating circumstances, Delaware County was unable to keep up with the daily influx of incoming applications despite additional staff using more computer equipment purchased before the election and working long, extended hours verifying applications and mailing out ballots to reduce the backlog. The state must certify that any ballot challenges have been resolved before county election bureaus can begin producing and sending out ballots to voters requesting them. There were significant operating issues identified at poll locations and with the process for returning ballots and materials to Media on election night. Good-faith efforts were made to address problems in real-time as best as possible. Lessons learned will be applied moving forward to be better prepared and resourced for managing anticipated heavy voter turnout for the general election.   County departments stepped up in a dedicated all-hands-on-deck effort to do solve problems and serve Delaware County voters to the very best of their collective ability.

Certification of election results. Ms. Hagan explained that three reports make up the County's official certification of election results – cumulative, precinct, and write-in reports. In response to Mr. Byrne's question about whether public comments should be read at this time, Mr. Parks said it would be appropriate to read public comments received relating to the accuracy of the election results before Board members voted on certifying the results.   Ms. Lunkenheimer moved a motion to certify the election results and Mr. Byrne seconded.   Mr. Byrne acknowledged the hard work put forth but adding mistakes must be owned. He believed the Board didn't do its job well. He recommended assembling a nine-member bipartisan panel to review primary election activities and the Board's actions moving forward. Mr. Lawrence, like Mr. Byrne, believed there was transparency and a free and fair election notwithstanding previously described challenges and reiterated his willingness to listen to all voices in the interest of making improvements. Ms. Lunkenheimer expressed the election was carried out with transparency, a lot of hard work by many and in the spirit of following a bipartisan process in internal meetings. She owned and wanted to learn from past mistakes coupled with a personal commitment to doing better in the future. The motion to certify the election results carried with Ms. Lunkenheimer and Mr. Lawrence voting yes and Mr. Byrne voting no.

State reimbursement for ballot processing. Ms. Hagan discussed certification for state reimbursement in the amount of $81.60 for sending absentee ballots to military service members domestically and overseas. Ms. Lunkenheimer moved a motion to seek state reimbursement for sending ballots as presented and Mr. Byrne seconded. The motion carried by the unanimous vote of the Board.

Ratification of election results. Ms. Hagan requested approval of documents reporting election results to the Pennsylvania Department of State, as required by law. Ms. Lunkenheimer moved a motion to ratify the reports and Mr. Byrne seconded. The motion carried with Ms. Lunkenheimer and Mr. Lawrence voting yes and Mr. Byrne voting no.

Polling place changes.   Mr. Lawrence explained Mr. Savage has the duty to assign temporary use of poll locations on an emergency basis when designated locations become unavailable after the last meeting of the Board of Elections and prior to an election.

Mr. Savage presented emergency changes in poll locations for the Board's approval.

1. Ridley 1-3 to move to Woodland Fire Company.

2. Folcroft 1 to move to Folcroft Union Church.

Ms. Lunkenheimer moved to ratify the proposed poll locations and Mr. Byrne seconded. The motion carried with the unanimous vote of the Board.

Public comments. The first public comment was read by Mr. Byrne followed by others read by Ms. Hagan and Mr. Lawrence.

Andy Reilly – Virtual meetings conducted as a result of the pandemic shuts out important public comment and cooperation from the political parties. Consideration should be given to having one representative from each political party to participate live to ensure a smooth and error-free election.

Shane Lair – Expressed concern that Republican poll workers in Aston did not show up nor was any notice provided to the minority party regarding their intentions not to fulfill their duties and (consequently) to abandon voters on election day, necessitating the emergency appointment of poll workers.

Victoria Brown – More staff and equipment is needed to achieve smoother election operations.

Diane Leahan – Suggested having more training sessions so people feel more confident answering questions and working inside the poll.

James Zigelhoffer – Commended the efforts of all who worked under very challenging conditions, created in part by the pandemic and introduction of new voting equipment and processes.

Pam & Hal Allen – Expressed that some primary election voters were confused about whether facemasks must be worn by greeters standing outside a poll location and departed without voting. A voter who believed he registered as an independent and, whose name did not appear in the poll book, was allowed to vote with a regular Republican ballot after the judge of elections

claimed he knew the person voted Republican in past elections.   Ms. Hagan was instructed to share the email with Mr. Parks for investigation.

David Director – The primary was a dry run to work out issues with a new voting system leading up to the general election. The voting process became more challenging to manage when the pandemic hit and a change in the law allowed the use of no-excuse mail-in ballots, which created record demand for voting by mail.

Rachel Amdur – Consolidation of more than 400 poll locations was a huge undertaking complicated by the arrival of the pandemic, requiring collaboration across party lines to staff polls in Haverford on election day that wasn't forthcoming from Republicans.

Margaret Patton – Consolidation of poll locations makes it harder and more confusing to vote; ability to vote by mail becomes more important if the coronavirus flares up in the fall.

Christina Iacono –Delaware County will need more printers, mail sorters, and label machines capable of working in tandem with state databases print out ballots; state database must be able to handle the workload without crashing or slowing down.

Mr. Lawrence adjourned the meeting after stating there was no other business.