

**March 2, 2021 PRE PRIMARY MEETING
OF THE DELAWARE COUNTY ELECTION BOARD**

PRESENT: Gerald Lawrence
Ashley Lunkenheimer
James Byrne, Jr.
Manley Parks, Solicitor

Also Present: Laureen Hagan, Bureau of Elections
Crystal Winterbottom, Voter Registration Office
Jim Savage, Voting Machine Warehouse
Howard Lazarus, Executive Director
Maryanne Jackson, Interim Director of Elections
Christina Iacono, Poll Worker Coordinator

Mr. Lawrence called the meeting to order

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes from the January 15, 2021 Board Meeting. Mr. Byrne moved to approve the January 15, 2021 Board minutes and Ms. Lunkenheimer seconded the motion. Motion to approve the January 15, 2021 Board minutes approved 3-0.

Public Comment

Mr. Lawrence informed the public that there were a few emailed public comments already sent to the Board to be read. Mr. Lawrence stated he had read between 40-50 and a lot were regarding drop boxes with a few others. Ms. Hagan informed the Board and public that there were approximately 15 more with the majority about drop boxes. The following were in favor of keeping and using the drop boxes: Peter Periginelli – Media; Cathleen Cochi – Ridley Park; Sandy Harrison – Ardmore; Barb Gallagher; Marsha Pellchet – Haverford; Ann McLoughlin – Rose Valley; Tu Packard – Media; Janice Hammond – Drexel Hill; Carriann Adams – Drexel Hill; Peggy Wilson – Drexel Hill; Lucia Cox – Drexel Hill; David Hammond – Drexel Hill; Delores Lombardi – Upper Darby. Ms. Hagan read Joan Mitchell of Folsom in which the email thanked the Board for additional service and was against the ballot boxes and suggested to invest in more in-person and let mail in ballot be used by those who are disabled or have an illness. Mr. Lawrence stated there were also several opposed of the drop boxes.

Director of Elections Report

Ms. Jackson informed the Board that the HR department had done an extensive search for hiring for the position of Director of Elections. The new position would report to the Board of Elections and the Executive Director and be in charge over all 3 of the election offices to make it more modern. The Board was informed that after a country wide search there were 25 applicants and 2 candidates to which one withdrew. The Board interviewed the final candidate Mr. Jim Allen. His extensive background was given. A motion was made to approve James Allen as Director of Elections by Ms. Lunkenheimer and seconded by Mr. Byrne for discussion. After further discussion on many topics from location of applicants to financials etc. a vote on the previous motion was called and approved 2-1.

Ms. Jackson asked the Board for approval for the bidding process contract for 2021. Ms. Jackson stated the 1st of 3 was for the contract currently held by Hughes for the pickup and return of the election caddies at the warehouse. The 2nd is for the ballot fulfillment (Primary 2021) and Ms. Jackson stated that it was the suggestion of Ms. Hagan to use a company that would fulfill both the printing and mailing out of the ballot. The 3rd would be for the cleaning and sanitizing of polling places after the primary. There was much discussion and comments that the company used for November ballot printing and mailing did an excellent job as well as certain technical standards and specification that should be required for printing of the ballots moving forward. There was concern on the number of bids that would be received and what the estimated ballot count for the Primary will be and Ms. Hagan stated that the bid can be written in a manner that they receive the maximum number of bidders however preference would be given to those who provide both printing and mailing in one location. Mr. Byrne requested that all such issues by involving the departments be on the agenda. Mr. Byrne moved to have the three contracts put out for bid (Pick Up and Return election materials, Ballot Fulfillment and Cleaning) and seconded by Ms. Lunkenheimer. Motion approved 3-0.

Ms. Jackson then discussed the deployment of the drop boxes. Following a brief background of their deployment from the fall of 2020 and amount of usage from the voters that the boxes had as well as the legal agreements surrounding them. Ms. Jackson then mentioned that 7 of the drop box sites needed maintenance or to move and were as follows: 3 needed trimming of landscape – Sharon Hill, Marple and Swarthmore. There were 3 that needed the poll placement reviewed or electrical back up possibly run and are as follows: Media, Nether Providence and Upper Darby. Morton made the seventh and needed to be replaced with one of the surpluses as this box had a faulty door but was secure through the general election. Ms. Jackson stated that the plan would be to deploy the boxes 5 days after the ballots were mailed through 8pm on May 18th. A motion was made by Ms. Lunkenheimer to authorize Ms. Jackson to move forward as she had outlined of letters being sent to the municipalities by end of March regarding deployment of drop boxes and scope the cost for maintenance or needed changes to the drop boxes and Mr. Byrne seconded the motion for more discussion. More discussion was had in regards to the letters received both in favor and against the drop boxes to the costs estimated to reactivate the SIM cards(\$2200.00) and deployment of retrieval teams (\$14,350.00) to the cost for someone from Park Police to watch the 41 boxes 24 hours a day 7 days a week (\$22,500.00) to the total of \$39,000.00. There was then further discussion. Motion to allow Ms. Jackson to move forward with what she discussed called to vote and approved 2-1.

Ms. Jackson then discussed and gave a background to the voter service centers as used in the 2020 General such as location, amount of use etc. Ms. Jackson suggested only one voter service center in Media for the 2021 Primary, as that was the most used center and the volume is not expected to be as great to need 3 of the centers for the Primary but may need to revisit that for the Municipal Election. Ms. Jackson went on to explain the voter service center in Media would be from April 26, 2021 – May 18, 2021 with the hours of Monday, Wednesday, Friday 8:30am - 4:30pm; Tuesday & Thursday 8:00am-8:00pm and Saturday 9am-12 noon. Ms. Jackson estimated that the 12-15 additional staffing would range between \$32,500.00 -\$35,000.00. There was then discussion as to if authorization for potential addition of sites for the fall needed a recommendation and Mr. Parks believed it was administrative in nature needing no action. A motion was made by Mr. Byrne to authorize the operation of a Voter Service Center in Media and close the other 2 locations and seconded by Ms. Lunkenheimer. Motion approved 3-0.

Chief Clerk to Board of Elections Report

Ms. Hagan requested the ratification of Legal notices of the 2021 Municipal Primary. Mr. Byrne moved to ratify the legal notice of the 2021 Municipal Primary and Ms. Lunkenheimer seconded the motion. Motion approved 3-0.

Ms. Hagan then requested the consideration of the legal notice for the Casting of Lots to be held on March 17, 2021 which needs to move to larger space and possibly stagger the times for offices to control possible crowds. Mr. Byrne moved to approve the legal notice for Casting of Lots on March 17, 2021 and for it to be held in a larger location than the BOE in Media office at staggered levels to remain COVID compliant and seconded by Ms. Lunkenheimer. Motion approved 3-0.

Ms. Hagan gave an update on the filing of nomination petitions stating that they had seen an increase that day and the day before and was hopeful to have an unofficial listing of petitioners by end of day March 10, 2021. Ms. Hagan suggested that all local candidates review the list. Mr. Lawrence thanked Ms. Hagan and noted that her job has become more and more difficult, the Board agreed.

Ms. Hagan then addressed questions about scanning petitions and informed the Board that such an option was considered however it was unable to be accomplished due to time constraints for 2021 and therefore not feasible in 2021. Ms. Hagan stated that the Permanent Mail In mailing was sent out in 2021 from those that selected it in 2020. Ms. Hagan informed the Board that there were 3 types of voters who received the notice, Absentee, Alternative and Mail In applicants. Ms. Hagan stated that the alternative applicants would not be able to be made public. Ms. Hagan went on to explain the status of the absentee and mail in ballot applications were being entered and that there has been an uptick in applications received, she also explained that once the ballot is certified usually by mid-April she can try to run the reports 2x a week and as SURE is aging running them 2x a week is usually a good balance.

Mr. Lawrence answered the question of why public comments received prior to cut off for the meeting were not read aloud but were made public with the minutes. He went on to explain that public comment being more effective with a live meeting and Mr. Byrne agreed and looks forward to public in person meetings.

Poll Worker Supervisor Report

Ms. Iacono stated that she had 3 issues for discussion with the first being the payment for poll workers who were wrongfully classified, for example as an assistant but worked the poll the entire day etc. Ms. Lunkenheimer made a motion to pay all poll workers that worked be paid and Mr. Byrne seconded the motion. Motion approved 3-0.

Ms. Iacono then went on to discuss the pay scale and training and hazard pay. She suggested that the training and hazard pay be separate in case something needed to be adjusted. Ms. Lunkenheimer understands the changes but suggested a proposal needs to be reviewed and Ms. Iacono stated she would send them a proposal via email for the next meeting for review. Mr. Byrne stated there are parameters of what can be paid.

Supervisor of Voting Machine Warehouse Report

Mr. Savage asked for a motion to move Marple 3-1,3-2, & 3-3 from St. Pius to Russell Elementary school as the church notified him, they can no longer be a polling location. Mr. Savage stated that there are no public facilities in the 3rd ward and that Russell Elementary is in the adjacent 6th ward but it is a bipartisan agreement for the change, and it is already inspected as it is already a polling location. Mr. Byrne moved to change the polling location of Marple 3rd ward (3-1,3-2,3-3) to Russell Elementary and Ms. Lunkenheimer seconded the motion. Motion approved 3-0.

Mr. Savage gave an update on the bid for delivery and return of Voting Machine Equipment. Mr. Savage stated that he had received approval to put the bid on County Council agenda for the March 3, 2021 meeting. Mr. Savage also stated that the bid use to be a multiyear bid but as of last year became an annual bid. Mr. Savage asked the Board to consider the PPR equipment delivery and therefore crafted the bid to reflect that for the Primary and if needed in the Municipal Election as there is no way on March 2nd to determine if that would be needed in November. Mr. Savage stated that the bid would close March 30, 2021.

Chief Clerk to the Voter Registration Commission Report

Ms. Winterbottom stated she had nothing for review but would like to give the board a few updates. Ms. Winterbottom informed the boards that they had processed 25,000 applications since the last election and that the last day to apply prior to the Primary is end of day May 3, 2021. Ms. Winterbottom also stated that the changes made to the Marple 3rd ward the office would begin to make those changes and send out new registration cards to those affected.

Old Business - None

New Business – None

Public Comment

Mr. Lawrence stated that he would like to follow up with Mr. Lazarus as it appears, he is no longer on the call-in regard to vaccinating the poll workers as that would be a good thing to facilitate.

Mr. Lawrence asked Ms. Hagan if there were any further public comments and Ms. Hagan answered yes. Ms. Hagan read the following: Jean Mann – Drexel Hill supports the use of drop boxes, Tracy Lira – Havertown supports the use of drop boxes, Kimberly Witmer – Brookhaven does not agree with hiring the new director of elections as the salary is absurd and candidate should be from Delaware County or at least Pennsylvania, Cira Grace – Darby does not agree with the hiring of the new director at a 6 figure salary, Bob Diluzio does not agree and states that the Board will be voted out and John Kennedy – Wallingford opposes an outside candidate when there are amply qualified candidates within Delaware County. Mr. Lawrence addressed the litigation mentioned in the previously received public comment and made it know that the Board of Elections was not suing anyone but was being sued. Mr. Lawrence then clarified that the Board is appointed by County Council and not voted in nor are they paid.

There being no further business meeting was adjourned at 3:30pm.