

Delaware County Board of Elections – Minutes – Meeting of January 14, 2025

Board and staff in attendance

Ashley Lunkenheimer, Chair

Scott Alberts, Member

John C. McMeekin II, Member

Jim Allen, Election Director

J. Manly Parks, Solicitor

Jackie Dunn, Voting Machine Warehouse Chief Custodian

Crystal Winterbottom, Voter Registration Chief Clerk

Lisa Jackson, Campaign Finance Supervisor

Meeting called to order

Pledge of allegiance

Review of agenda

Re-organization vote

Board members were sworn in. Member Alberts nominated Member Lunkenheimer to serve as Chair, and Member McMeekin seconded the nomination. The motion was approved unanimously. Chair Lunkenheimer remarked that she was honored

Public Comment

Joy Schwartz commented that the proposed drop-box reductions could go further, and that precinct consolidations can make sense but that precincts should remain small. Nick Manganaro commented on the removal of voters who recently were listed as “active.” Gregory Stenstrom commented about registered voters and qualified electors and counts of mail ballots. Laura Lewis made remarks about registered voters and qualified electors. Scott Thomas discussed photography of records and secured-build validations. John Child commented on hash testing and voter-service centers. Carris Kocher commented on the agenda, proposed precinct consolidations and the Return Board. Leah Hoopes commented on litigation. Christine Reuther commented in favor of precinct consolidation and suggested this be the first of multiple reviews in terms of reducing costs, staffing and preparation of equipment. Charlotte Hummel commented in support of consolidations and spoke of having excess poll workers but also wanting a second Poll Pad in consolidated precincts. Colleen Guiney thanked the newest member and other members of the Board, and in support of precinct consolidations. Charlie Alexander commented that he believed the election director should be fired. James Small commented on removing drop boxes. Scott Brady spoke in opposition to consolidating precincts in Springfield.

Reduction in Drop Boxes

Mr. Allen reported that in 2020, Delaware County offered drop boxes to all 49 communities to avoid the appearance of favoring any community, 43 drop boxes were established, creating the largest network of drop boxes even though the County covers one of the smallest areas geographically. Since 2020, some drop boxes were removed at the request of communities or because of camera issues. Mr. Allen recommended removing the drop boxes in Colwyn, Millbourne, Marcus Hook, East Lansdowne, Ridley Park, Rutledge, Clifton Heights. The recommendations are based on these sites’ low usage, and based also on the availability of drop boxes in nearby communities. Mr. Alberts said he likes the drop-box program but also supports finding the right number. Mr. McMeekin asked if more drop boxes could be reduced in the future, and Mr. Allen responded that there are other possible reductions, and this list represented the items that can be pursued now. Mr. Alberts made a motion and Mr. McMeekin

seconded the motion to notify the seven communities on plans to remove the drop boxes listed in Mr. Allen's recommendation. The motion was approved.

Precinct Consolidations

Mr. Allen reported how over the last four years, the Board and staff have concentrated on upgrading ballot and equipment testing, improving training, better equipping the polling places with adequate voting stations and the new Poll Pad check-in system, and streamlining the return of election materials from the precincts. As a result of these efforts, the County handled 22% more in-person voter in 2024 than in 2020, and yet had better preparation of poll workers, faster check-ins, shorter lines, voters reporting much shorter times to cast their ballots, and the earliest reporting of election reports in Southeast Pennsylvania. However, the extremely large number of small precincts in Delaware County is adding to the cost of administering those services. Delaware County is spending excessive amounts of taxpayer time and money providing mini- and micro-precinct. Delaware County has more precincts than Montgomery County, which is 50% larger. Meantime, Chester County has 7% fewer voters yet 46% fewer precincts. Mr. Allen said the excessive number of precincts in Delaware County has been an issue for years and complicates and exacerbates the cost of each election. Each precinct requires a specially programmed/tested equipment, separate supply carrier, separate trucking/delivery services, unique ballots, separate ballot scanner, separate TouchWriter, separate ballot printer, a separate team of poll workers, separate ballot box, separate numbered list of voter, separate sets of forms, separate election results, separate return sheet and related result tapes, separate poll worker payroll preparation, separate paper trail for the Return Board to audit, and additional training sessions. Mr. Allen called redundant precincts the pebble in the pond that sends out a ripple of expenses across the entire operation. Of the 104 precincts being targeted, 93 are already voting in the same location. In the remaining 11 precincts, voters would be moving to a nearby location.

The list of proposed consolidations are:

- Chester City 1st Ward 3rd Prec with Chester City 1st Ward 6th Prec
- Chester City 1st Ward 2nd Precinct with Chester City 1st Ward 8th Precinct
- Chester City 5th Ward 1st Prec with Chester City 5th Ward 2nd Prec
- Chester City 7th Ward 1st Precinct with Chester City 7th Ward 3rd Prec and with Chester City 7th Ward 4th Prec
- Chester City 10th Ward 2nd Prec with Chester City 10th Ward 3rd Prec
- Chester Township 1st Prec with Chester Township 2nd Prec
- Chester Township 3rd Prec with Chester Township 4th Prec
- Clifton Heights Boro3rd Ward 1st Prec with Clifton Heights Boro3rd Ward 2nd Prec
- Collingdale Borough 4th Prec with Collingdale Borough 5th Prec
- Collingdale Borough 2nd Prec with Collingdale Borough 7th Prec
- Concord Township 4th Prec with Concord Township 5th Prec
- Darby Township 3rd Ward 1st Prec with Darby Township 3rd Ward 2nd Prec
- Darby Township 5th Ward 1st Prec with Darby Township 5th Ward 2nd Prec
- East Lansdowne Borough Eastern with East Lansdowne Borough Western
- Eddystone Borough Northern with Eddystone Borough Southern
- Folcroft Borough 1st Prec with Folcroft Borough 2nd Prec
- Folcroft Borough 3rd Prec with Folcroft Borough 4th Prec
- Haverford Township 8th Ward 1st Prec with Haverford Township 8th Ward 4th Prec
- Glenolden Borough 2nd Prec with Glenolden Borough 5th Prec
- Lansdowne Borough 2nd Prec with Lansdowne Borough 3rd Prec

- Lansdowne Borough 6th Prec with Lansdowne Borough 11th Prec
- Lansdowne Borough 7th Prec with Lansdowne Borough 8th Prec
- Marcus Hook Borough 1st Prec with Marcus Hook Borough 2nd Prec
- Marcus Hook Borough 3rd Prec with Marcus Hook Borough 4th Prec
- Middletown Township 4th Dist 1st Prec with Middletown Township 4th Dist 2nd Prec
- Nether Providence Twp 2nd Ward 1st Prec with Nether Providence Twp 2nd Ward 2nd Prec
- Nether Providence Twp 5th Ward 1st Prec with Nether Providence Twp 5th Ward 2nd Prec
- Norwood Borough 1st Prec with Norwood Borough 3rd Prec
- Norwood Borough 2nd Prec with Norwood Borough 4th Prec
- Norwood Borough 5th Prec with Norwood Borough 7th Prec
- Prospect Park Borough 3rd Prec with Prospect Park Borough 4th Prec
- Ridley Township 1st Ward 1st Prec with Ridley Township 1st Ward 3rd Prec
- Ridley Township 2nd Ward 1st Prec with Ridley Township 2nd Ward 3rd Prec
- Sharon Hill Borough 2nd Prec with Sharon Hill Borough 4th Prec
- Springfield Township 6th Ward 1st Prec with Springfield Township 6th Ward 2nd Prec
- Springfield Township 6th Ward 3rd Prec with Springfield Township 6th Ward 4th Prec
- Trainer Borough Lennox Park Prec with Trainer Borough Lower Prec and with Trainer Borough Upper Prec
- Upland Borough 1st Prec with Upland Borough 2nd Prec
- Upper Darby Township 1st Dist 1st Prec with Upper Darby Township 1st Dist 2nd Prec
- Upper Darby Township 1st Dist 4th Prec with Upper Darby Township 1st Dist 7th Prec
- Upper Darby Township 3rd Dist 1st Prec with Upper Darby Township 3rd Dist 11th Prec
- Upper Darby Township 4th Dist 1st Prec with Upper Darby Township 4th Dist 4th Prec
- Upper Darby Township 4th Dist 5th Prec with Upper Darby Township 4th Dist 6th Prec
- Upper Darby Township 4th Dist 8th Prec with Upper Darby Township 4th Dist 10th Prec
- Upper Darby Township 6th Dist 1st Prec with Upper Darby Township 6th Dist 5th Prec
- Upper Darby Township 6th Dist 7th Prec with Upper Darby Township 6th Dist 8th Prec
- Upper Darby Township 6th Dist 9th Prec with Upper Darby Township 6th Dist 12th Prec
- Upper Darby Township 7th Dist 1st Prec with Upper Darby Township 7th Dist 6th Prec
- Upper Darby Township 7th Dist 2nd Prec with Upper Darby Township 7th Dist 4th Prec
- Yeadon Borough 2nd Prec with Yeadon Borough 5th Prec
- Yeadon Borough 8th Prec with Yeadon Borough 9th Prec

Mr. Parks described the process. There would be petition to the Court of Common Pleas. There then would be a hearing on the petition. The Court would need to grant preliminary approval for the matter to come back to the Board. There then would be a hearing by the Board, followed by a final action by the Court of Common Pleas. The statutes mandate notices with the hearings.

Member McMeekin asked if any of the changes would impact which districts people would vote in, such as which district for Magisterial District Judge or which district in the House of Representatives. Mr. Allen responded that none of the changes would impact which voters vote in which districts. The only impact would be persons elected to serve on the District Board as Judge of Election, Majority Inspector or Minority Inspector. Mr. McMeekin asked if there were thoughts about splitting any of the super-sized precincts. Mr. Allen said in some cases no, because the large precinct is already in a building with multiple other precincts, and splitting the largest one would only complicate that polling place.

However, Mr. Allen said there are cases like Chester Heights, where the community might want to explore splitting into south and north sections to vote at separate sites.

Member Alberts made a motion that the Board adopt the initial recommendations for consolidations, and Member McMeekin seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Voter Registration Chief Clerk Crystal Winterbottom reported on the performance of annual voter-record updates, per a schedule with the Department of State, that identified 18,401 voters that have been inactive for two federal elections who could be removed. Additionally, five-year notices were mailed to 2,369 voters who had no activity in recent years. These actions reduced registrations in Delaware County to approximately 406,000 voters. Ms. Winterbottom also noted that contrary to assertions in public comment, no canceled voters were “reactivated,” and any voter who previously was canceled would have had to file a new registration. There also was discussion of how voters cannot be removed without authorizing the cancellation during the 90-day period before a federal election.

Campaign Finance Supervisor Lisa Jackson reported on requests to waive penalties from: Innovate Glenolden; the Committee to Elect Positive Candidates; and the Aston Democratic Committee. Member McMeekin made a motion and Member Alberts seconded the motion to approve the waivers. Motion was approved.

Mr. Allen discussed pending moves of polling places in Chester City.

Mr. Parks discussed a pending re-districting in Upper Providence that is still pending in court.

Member Alberts made the motion and Member McMeekin seconded the motion to adjourn. Motion was approved.