

**July 30, 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: Howard Lazarus, County Executive Director  
Laureen Hagan, Bureau of Elections  
Jim Savage, Voting Machine Warehouse

Pledge of Allegiance.

Post-2020 Primary Election planning update. Mr. Lawrence engaged meeting participants in a conversation about questions and topics of interest that came to his attention. Mr. Lazarus explained office space is being leased and outfitted in the City of Chester to support Election Bureau operations in terms of sending out and subsequently processing returned absentee and mail-in ballots to ensure every vote is counted. A contractor will handle the mailing of ballots during the start-up phase of the leased facility so that ballots sent out early can be tracked and voters requesting ballots can be matched to those who have received them. Additional staff will be hired to improve operational efficiency for handling an anticipated greater volume of general election ballot applications and ultimately to allow for faster reporting of results.

Ms. Hagan reported that of the 87,000 ballots applications received for the primary election, 55,000 of those will be carried over to honor requests made in the spring for general election ballots to automatically be sent. She advised voters using the online system to enter the street address and any apartment number in the same address field due to issues identified in the state system with capturing this information. The intent is to hopefully begin mailing out ballots the week of September 14<sup>th</sup>, pending required state certification of ballots. A postal permit will be secured to move ballots through the mail faster and to aid in better tracking of them. New equipment will be in place to time stamp and sort returned ballots by precinct order and provide for reliable signature verification to facilitate more efficient and accurate processing. Mr. Lawrence explained that the counting of ballots can only start in the morning of election day. However, various legislative efforts are underway in Harrisburg to potentially allow county election boards to start preparing and organizing ballots for counting before election day without beginning to count them. In addition to Media, Mr. Lazarus explained other locations are being considered to provide pre-election voter services.

Mr. Savage explained some consolidation of poll locations for the primary election was necessary due to unavailability of usual locations and a shortage of poll workers due to the covid-19 outbreak. Some original poll locations will be available in November while temporary locations used for the primary election will be used for the general election. Ballot marking machines will again be in use at the polls along with introducing scanners that will be programmed for use at specific precincts. Mr. Lazarus said voters will be educated about what to expect at the polls and the appropriate health safety measures the County is putting into place.

Ms. Hagan explained vacant poll positions will be identified and she will work with community partners to help fill them. Early and aggressive recruitment efforts will be undertaken so poll workers can be properly trained to work on election day. Mr. Lawrence explained that unofficial in-person voting counts will be reported on election night as they traditionally have been

in past elections. However, it's harder to predict the timeframe for reporting absentee and mail-in voting results as they will account for a much larger portion of total voting results than in past years. Ms. Hagan commented that, assuming the County cannot begin counting ballots until election day under current law, it could take at least two weeks to report results of an estimated 175,000 absentee and mail-in ballots plus provisional ballots the County expects to receive for the general election.

Mr. Lawrence explained additional staff will be hired to answer phone calls about ballot questions and callers will be advised they can check on the status of ballots themselves by visiting [www.votespa.com](http://www.votespa.com). Voter education outreach will also provide voters with answers to their questions without having to call the office.

Organizational assessment. A consultant report with recommendations on organizational restructuring and staffing responsibilities based on the scope of the work to be done will be made available to the public. Mr. Lazarus provided details about the County leasing additional office space at The Wharf at Rivertown, 2501 Seaport Drive in Chester for Election Bureau operations to house an expanded staff and vote processing equipment starting September 1, 2020. Ms. Lunkenheimer moved a motion to designate the proposed lease space as a county election office and a second related motion to recommend to County Council that they fulfill the lease requirements and assist and pay for operations at the new space and seconded by Mr. Byrne. A discussion ensued regarding Mr. Byrne's questions regarding the need for additional space and office furnishings beyond what is currently available. The motion carried with Ms. Lunkenheimer and Mr. Lawrence voting yes and Ms. Byrne voting no.

Proposed staff restructuring. A consultant report recommended the creation of an Elections Director position for the efficient coordination of Bureau of Elections, Voter Registration, and Voting Machine Warehouse operations. Additional Election Bureau personnel needs were identified related to hiring more clerks and creating two new deputy director roles—one for financial reporting and assisting with the staffing vacancies or understaffing at polling places and a second position with mail-in voting responsibility for managing the process for receiving ballot applications and mailing out ballots. Ms. Lunkenheimer moved a motion to approve proposed staff additions and Mr. Byrne seconded. A discussion ensued following Mr. Byrne questioning the need for spending on multiple deputy director positions, expressing concerns about the appearance of transferring certain board duties and responsibilities to newly hired personnel, and asserting that efforts aimed at staffing polling places should be done at the local level. Mr. Parks explained the administrative staff members are tasked with carrying out policies set by the Board. The motion carried with Ms. Lunkenheimer and Mr. Lawrence voting yes and Ms. Byrne voting no.

Non-voting matters. Mr. Lawrence introduced several topics for purposes of sharing information and not requiring a Board vote as follows: informational meetings between independent Election Board and County Council members, election department heads holding weekly staff update meetings with the opportunity for various county department heads and Board and County Council members to listen in.

Mail-in ballot process. Ms. Hagan presented a recommendation for outsourcing to enhance the speed, efficiency, and accuracy of the mail-in ballot process. She recommended an expanded role for Michigan Election Resources (MER) to continue printing election day ballots and assume responsibility for initial mail-in ballot fulfillment. The County would continue to handle absentee ballots and ballots for military and overseas voters as well as maintain the ability to manage mail-in ballot fulfillment, as necessary, closer to election day. MER handling high-

volume ballot fulfillment earlier in the election cycle with responsibility transitioning to county resources closer to election day represents a smart blended approach to move ballots as quickly and efficiently as possible through the U.S. Postal Service. Ms. Lunkenheimer moved a motion to approve recommendations for MER to print and mail ballots and Mr. Byrne seconded. The motion carried with the unanimous vote of the Board to approve the recommendation.

Return postage. Ms. Lunkenheimer moved a motion to recommend to County Council that they fund return postage on the mail-in ballot return envelope for the November election and Mr. Byrne seconded. Ms. Hagan recommended the County secure a postal permit for imprinting on the return envelope so postage costs would only be incurred when voters mail back their ballots and delays could be avoided that would otherwise occur by running ballots through postage meters. The motion carried with Ms. Lunkenheimer and Mr. Lawrence voting yes and Ms. Byrne voting no.

Bureau of Elections report. Ms. Hagan summarized recommended purchases of additional equipment to ensure smooth ballot processing for the November election as follows: mail ballot inserter for use in conjunction with a sorting machine to allow for faster and more efficient automated processing of ballots; Hart Verity equipment to permit more productive creation of ballot files; Hart count stations to assist in ballot resolutions and capturing write-in votes during the tabulation process; Hart print stations for use in satellite offices to print ballots for on-the-spot in-person voting; memory drives to support ballot testing and moving data from one piece of equipment to another; and various office equipment to better organize ballots in batches for more efficient and trouble-free processing. Mr. Byrne moved a motion to approve recommended equipment purchases and Ms. Lunkenheimer seconded. The motion carried with the unanimous vote of the Board to approve the recommendations.

Mail-in ballot dropboxes. Board members engaged in an extended discussion about whether to recommend that County Council purchase an appropriate number of heavy-duty, weather-resistant dropboxes for the deposit of mail-in ballots with video surveillance capable of being used long-term beyond the November 2020 general election. Mr. Parks advised Board members to decide as a policy matter whether dropboxes should be deployed throughout the county in the event County Council made an independent financial decision to purchase them. Mr. Lawrence concluded there was not enough information available to Board members to vote on dropboxes at this meeting.

Voting Machine Warehouse report. Mr. Savage detailed proposed poll location changes as follows:

1. Darby Township 2 bipartisan agreement to remain at Darby Township Community Center, Darby Township 3-1, 3-2, 4, 5-1 and 5-2 to move to Darby Township School.
2. Unanimous agreement of Marcus Hook Republican co-chair, borough manager, and local election board representatives to move all four Marcus Hook precincts to Marcus Hook Community Center.
3. Voting Machine Warehouse recommendations to carryover following poll locations from the primary election to the general election due to unavailability of historical locations: Middletown Township 3-1 and 3-3 to remain at Glenwood Elementary School, Middletown 4-1 to remain at Easter Seals of Southeastern PA, Middletown 4-3 to remain at Middletown Municipal Building.

4. Bipartisan agreement to carryover the following poll locations from the primary election to the general election: Newtown 1, 4 and 5 to remain at Marple-Newtown High School, Newtown 3 6, and 8 to remain at the Gauntlet Center.
5. Bipartisan agreement for Ridley Township 1-3 to move to Knights of Columbus, and to keep primary election locations in place with Ridley Township 3-1, 3-2 to remain at Ridley Community Center, and Ridley 9-1 to remain at Amosland Elementary School.

Mr. Byrne move a motion to approve recommended poll location changes as presented and Ms. Lunkenheimer seconded. The motion carried with the unanimous vote of the Board to approve the recommendations.

Public Comments. Ms. Hagan read comments submitted by Members of the public.

Colleen Guiney – Favors the installation of dropboxes around Delaware County.

Patricia Donnelly – Inquired about how to apply for employment for the general election.

Anne Mosakowski – League of Women Voters of Delaware County conducted a voter survey and made recommendations based on the results to ensure a safe, secure, and fair voter experience.

Julie Kimsey-Carroll- What happened to mail-in ballots that were requested by voters but never arrived?

Mary Clinton- What PPE will be provided to election board workers on election day on November 3rd?

Peggy Bradin-Wilson – What is the plan for judge of elections to return materials on election night?

Betty Ann Director – Is there a way to reverse my request for a mail-in ballot?

Terry Baraldi – Should poll workers return materials on election night to the new office location or in Media?

Olivia Smith – Will the process for pick-up and return of election day materials be streamlined? What's the status of poll locations in Chester?

Christopher Jackson – Questions about the Election Board's accountability, extent to which taxpayer interests are considered by the board, how the board balances taxpayer, voter, and resident interests?

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