

MINUTES

MEETING OF THE ALLEGHENY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

WEDNESDAY, MAY 3, 2023, 10:00 A.M., PUBLIC MEETING-GOLD ROOM, FOURTH FLOOR OF
THE ALLEGHENY COUNTY COURTHOUSE, PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA.

BOARD MEMBERS: HONORABLE RICH FITZGERALD, CHAIR-present
HONORABLE THOMAS DUERR, MEMBER-present
HONORABLE CYNTHIA KIRK, MEMBER-present

IN ATTENDANCE: JESSICA GAROFOLO-DEPUTY DIRECTOR, DEPT. OF
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
DAVID VOYE – MANAGER, DIVISION OF ELECTIONS
CHET HARHUT- DEPUTY DIVISION MANAGER
ALLAN J. OPSITNICK – ASST. COUNTY SOLICITOR

I. **CALL TO ORDER** –Meeting called to order by Chair Fitzgerald at 10:00 AM. Roll was taken by Mr. Opsitnick and requested a reorganization of the Board as the majority of the Board (Member Duerr and Member Kirk) were recent appointees. Member Duerr moved to reappoint Mr. Fitzgerald, seconded by Member Kirk. Passed 3-0. Mr. Fitzgerald remains Chair.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

From the following individuals:

a. Erika Rocchi Brusselars. Suggested more voter education regarding emergency absentee ballots and suggests that aggressively promote emergency absentee ballots. Inquired of plans for ballot curing and notice. Suggested that Elections deal with split polling places;

b. Kristin Mattarochia. Discussed a study of low propensity voters where 34 of said voters do not live at the address where they are registered. She knocked on doors. Also indicated that someone received multiple ballots. Indicated that she had a folder with information and was asked to provide that information;

c. M.J. Costello. Displayed a chart regarding the costs of using County employees for Election Day work. Further indicated that the Elections Warehouse is a black hole with no transparency. Mentioned ballot shortages and duplicates, furthering indicating that unofficial ballots are counted as votes;

d. Tony Golembiewski. Discussed voter removal program and indicated that a street list that he had acquired for Pittsburgh 9.2 was incorrect;

e. Patti Weaver. Said that votes should only count one time. Referred to the Leonard Speckin documents of September 16, 2022 and February 21, 2023. Indicated the need for fair and clean elections;

f. Matt Van Bibber. Refers to his report, submitted, and the Speckin documents mentioned Humboldt County, California, as to duplicate ballots in 2020. Also mentioned the Norwin School Board from Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania.

III. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 21, 2023 CERTIFICATION OF THE FEBRUARY 7, 2023 SPECIAL ELECTIONS.

Was explained by Mr. Opsitnick, that is that even though two-thirds of the Board were not appointed, the approval of Minutes is necessary as the Board is an ongoing body. With that explanation, approval of minutes was moved by Chair Fitzgerald, seconded by Member Duerr. Approved 3-0

IV. 2023 PRIMARY ELECTION PREPARATIONS

Director Garofolo indicated that a focus was on the high school poll worker program to help staff local Election Boards. The recruitment packet directed to high schools and students was distributed to the Board. Right now, County has approximately 100 students. Director Garofolo would like to double that for November. Director Garofolo further indicated that over 6,100 poll workers are already secured for the May 16 Primary Election, with one Judge of Election remaining.

Additionally, there have been over 200 polling place reviews regarding ADA accessibility and requirements. Of that number, three polling places required change.

Mr. Harhut indicated that 102,584 voters applied to vote by mail or by absentee ballot. Of that number 86,383 were Democrats and 16,142 were Republicans and 59 were independent voters attributable to the Special Election in Mt. Lebanon Ward 3, which is not a party primary. Mr. Harhut continued and added that, as of the time of the meeting, 30,799 ballots were returned and 6,000 the day of the meeting. Mr. Harhut indicated that 415 ballots have been returned to voters with a new envelope and barcode for the following reasons:

- a. 137 had an improper date;
- b. 149 were without a signature and/or were undated;
- c. 129 were naked ballots, that is the secrecy envelope was not returned.

Mr. Harhut indicated that all voting machines were wrapped and ready for delivery in 55 truckloads.

Mr. Voye indicated a turnout projection of approximately 30%, further indicating that mail voting increases turnout 5-7%. Regarding ballot styles, there were both 1,324 democratic ballot styles and 1,324 republican ballot styles (one for each voting district) as well as 8 Mt. Lebanon ballot styles, given the Special Election.

Mr. Voye indicated that the current County Voter Registration is slightly more than 896,000 with approximately 509,000 Democrats and 244,000 Republicans. Approximately 43,000 registrations were removed, pursuant to law.

Mr. Voye further indicated that there were 30 new polling place locations. Examples were two polling place locations changed in Harrison Township because of flooring work in a fire hall that is normally used and West Jefferson Hills added a polling district.

Member Duerr requested that he be emailed mail in/absentee voter statistics and inquired what areas need poll workers.

Director Garofolo indicated those areas of most need were Pittsburgh 19th Ward, Harrison Township, and Shaler Township. Member Duerr suggested that poll worker recruitment, also use text messages.

Director Garofolo that texting was attempted in primary of 2021 without much response and that actual phone calls are more successful.

Member Duerr requested Mr. Voye explain the ballot confusion in Pittsburgh 6-1, which was a split precinct. Mr. Voye explained how that was remedied immediately and any erroneous ballot distribution was corrected. In addition, Mr. Voye indicated that the County Manager asked County Statistics to review the five other split voting districts, which was done.

Member Duerr asked Mr. Voye regarding returned ballots and asked if parties or activists can have that information. Mr. Voye indicated that the curing process is that the ballots are mailed directly to the voters. There is no cure list kept. Member Duerr indicated that if a list were compiled and made available there are people who would contact voters in need of curing and would work for free.

Member Kirk asked whether or not high school poll workers are registered voters. Director Garofolo said no, as 17-year-olds can participate and work a partial day but are not old enough to be registered.

Member Kirk indicated that certain long time poll workers reached out to her and indicated that they were not recruited. Director Garofolo replied by indicating that COVID changed the status of a number of prior poll workers but that County has reached back to lists from prior elections to contact and recruit longtime poll workers.

Mr. Voye explained the process of doing that.

Member Kirk indicated her daughter moved to New York and is registered New York but still registered in Pennsylvania. Mr. Voye explained the Eric Program, where 30 states match data to minimize registrations situations such as this.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 10:45 AM by Chairman Fitzgerald.