

MINUTES

MEETING OF THE ALLEGHENY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2023, 3:00 P.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- DIRECTOR, DEPT. OF ADMINISTRATIVE
SERVICES
JAMES DAVIS-DEPUTY DIRECTOR, DEPT. OF ADMINISTRATIVE
SERVICES
DAVID VOYE – MANAGER, DIVISION OF ELECTIONS
CHET HARHUT-DEPUTY MANAGER, DIVISION OF ELECTIONS
ALLAN J. OPSITNICK – ASST. COUNTY SOLICITOR
LISA G. MICHELE-ASST COUNTY SOLICITOR

I. CALL TO ORDER –Meeting called to order by Chair Fitzgerald at 3:00 PM. Roll was taken by Mr. Opsitnick. All members present.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Matthew Van Bibber-Expressed concerns about logic and accuracy testing of machines. Contends protective counter was reset illegally. Expressed concerns about County keeping two 850 scanner models, the rest having been replaced, as issues exist with scanning problems. Elections has not provided ballot images used at logic and accuracy. Offered advice to voters to not write-in a candidate's name when candidate is on the ballot. Expressed concerns about USB drives retrieved on election night.

William Towne-Expressed concerns as to adequate polling places. States some polling places have garage doors that are open impermissibly. Expressed concerns about e poll books and privacy issues. Indicated that once a mail-in ballot is completed and returned, it is no longer an official ballot and, as a result, mail-ballots can be thrown out. Regarding mail-in ballots, ballots have a code that may permit identification of the voter.

III. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES OF OCTOBER 2, 2023 MEETING

Moved by Member Kirk. Seconded by Member Duerr. Approved 3-0.

IV. 2023 MUNICIPAL ELECTION PREPARATIONS

Mr. Voye mentioned that today was the last day to register to vote. Currently, there are just under 900,000 voters in Allegheny County.

Mr. Harhut indicated that, regarding mail-ballots, 133,710 applications approved. 46,986 ballots returned with daily updates to be posted on the County website.

Mr. Harhut also indicated that there were 490 defective ballots sent back to the voter in the following categories:

- 180-incorrect date

- 120-naked ballots

- 180-date/signature issues

Chair Fitzgerald commented that this is the last election of its type with a previous election not using mail-in ballots so County can be fully prepared in the future.

Chair Fitzgerald also inquired as to number of poll workers. Director Garofolo indicated that there were 6,894 poll workers. Director Garofolo indicated that this was an excellent number thanks to a phenomenal recruitment effort by Elections staff and that the poll workers were a combination of old and new. Also, 190 poll workers were high school or college students. Director Garofolo also indicated that coming Monday, the Ross Street ballot drop-off program would begin and that 150 people are assigned to work the Elections warehouse on Election Day for both the 7:00 AM pre-canvass and the canvass.

Mr. Voye responded that he predicted turnout at 38%. Member Kirk felt that because a number of close school board races, she felt the turnout would be higher.

Member Duerr asked Director Garofolo about ballot drop days and hours. Director Garofolo indicated those dates and hours and further indicated that they would be posted online.

Member Duerr asked how to spoil a mail-in ballot. Mr. Harhut explained the surrender process and further indicated that Elections tripled the surrender forms going to each polling place from 10 to 30 and increased the number of provisional ballots to 50 for each polling place with extras out in the field with County workers.

Member Kirk commented on some election districts with a much larger number of voters and what would be done on Election Day. Director Garofolo indicated that some polling places would have an additional scanner and additional poll workers, perhaps as many as seven poll workers on the local Board.

Member Duerr inquired as to the cure process used by Elections for mail-in ballots. Mr. Harhut explained that process that, upon receipt, a curing letter and new materials are mailed to the voter until the Saturday before the election. Any problematic ballots received after that would result in an indication of a bad vote in the SURE System so that the voter may vote provisionally.

Member Kirk indicated that she had previously met with Director Garofolo and Assistant Solicitors Opsitnick and Michel regarding discussion of the citizen process to redistrict certain municipalities and look forward to a post-election meeting with various citizens and Elections.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment suggested by Chairman Fitzgerald. Moved by Member Duerr. Seconded by Member Kirk. Meeting adjourned at 3:26 PM