

MINUTES

MEETING OF THE ALLEGHENY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

MONDAY, APRIL 15, 2024, 3:00 P.M., PUBLIC MEETING-GOLD ROOM, FOURTH FLOOR OF
THE ALLEGHENY COUNTY COURTHOUSE, PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA.

BOARD MEMBERS: HONORABLE SARA INNAMORATO, CHAIR-present
HONORABLE BETHANY HALLAM, MEMBER-present
HONORABLE SAM DEMARCO, MEMBER-present

IN ATTENDANCE: JESSICA GAROFOLO-DEPUTY DIRECTOR, DEPT. OF
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES
JAMES DAVIS-DEPUTY DIRECTOR, DEPT. OF ADMINISTRATIVE
SERVICES
DAVID VOYE – MANAGER, DIVISION OF ELECTIONS
ALLAN J. OPSITNICK – ASST. COUNTY SOLICITOR
LISA G. MICHELE-ASST. COUNTY SOLICITOR

I. CALL TO ORDER –Chair Innamorato

II. CALL OF RULE- Mr. Opsitnick. All Present.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Brenda Regas, Crescent Township. Asked about Election Board training that allegedly permits illegal aliens to vote. Also inquired why Nikki Haley is still on the ballot. The 2016 election both she and her husband were required to vote provisional and says provisional ballot was not counted.

2. Juliette Zavon. Submitted a written statement, attached hereto, regarding issues with ballot quality control and read that statement.

3. Diane Susko. Stated that there is doubt about election integrity, a lack of transparency oversight and that the Elections Warehouse is shrouded in secrecy. Urges Board to take action to ensure transparency.

4. Kevin Karman. Stated increasing concerns about the last ten years in Elections administration. Concerned about fraudulent activity and believes should be an annual cleanup of voter rolls.

5. Matt Van Bibber. Regarding observations at tabulation center (Elections Warehouse). Feels that the Logic and Accuracy (L&A process) was too distant to observe and indicates that some L&A procedures were not followed. Asked why there are no written policies regarding zero prints and discussed “secret documents” from 2001-2002 and mentions duplicate ballots in the 2020 Presidential Election. Also alleged that voted ballots are not official ballots.

6. Christine Mattarochia, Moon Township. Commented regarding the County 911 ballot return site location that people were questioned by third-party representatives, further indicating that newly formed election districts in Moon contain some errors. Also indicates that a ballot application

was incorrectly sent to an in-law and that she had made prior complaints about bad registrations and addresses without response from County Elections. Also requests annual scrubbing of voter rolls.

7. Ira Glick. States that people in Elections authority are defensive and that is a bad optic. Mentioned a social contract and mentioned some anti-vax statements and statements against the justice system, indicating that the public must have trust.

8. Mary Jo Costello. Stated that Board of Elections meeting attendees are ignored by leadership except for Member Hallam and that transparency remains elusive.

Mr. Voye was asked to comment regarding statements made by certain public speakers. He indicated that while the law no longer requires zero prints to be posted at polling places, County Elections training urges that zero prints be posted at polls.

Emailed statements provided:

1. Brenda Foreman. Inquires whether Allegheny County or the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is in charge of their own voter rolls. Demand that voter rolls exclude non-citizens and anyone under 18.

2. William Towne. Argues that the County's position that voted ballots have a different status than an "official election ballot" is incorrect and makes voted ballots illegal, making election results subject to attack and disenfranchisement.

3. Charles Faltenovich. Mentions the Election Code procedures in Section 3154 regarding comparing number of votes with ballots cast in a district and reconciliation of returns as well as the 2%/2,000 ballot cast audit, contending that Section 3031.17 of the Election Code requires the audit be a manual hand count.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MARCH 20, 2024

Motion for approval by Member DeMarco. Seconded by Member Hallam. Approved 3-0.

V. 2024 GENERAL PRIMARY PREPARATIONS

Mr. Voye indicated that countywide registrations have increased by approximately 5,000 voters since 2023, approximately 120,000 mail-in/absentee voting applications have been processed with approximately 56,400 ballots returned including approximately 7,000 received today. There are 62 new polling place locations.

Mr. Harhut indicated that he had mailed 949 ballots with an error and the necessary cure instructions and materials and has received 170 corrected ballots.

Of the erroneous ballots (declaration envelopes) 666 had the wrong date, 70 were naked ballots (that number has decreased from prior elections) and 2,013 ballots lack a date or signature.

Director Garofolo indicated that all polls are staffed. There are 6,875 poll workers, including 140 high school students.

Regarding the ballot return sites, 461 ballots were returned on Saturday and 486 ballots were returned on Sunday and that those ballot return sites would again be open this coming weekend.

Director Garofolo stated the hours of the ballot return site at the County Office Building, mentioning that the righthand lane of Ross Street at the County Office Building shall be closed to permit people to quickly park, exit, and deliver their voted ballot.

Member DeMarco commented that Bob Howard, of Marshall Township, indicated that the North Park ballot return site went well and that the South Park ballot return site also went well with staff giving observers seats. Everything was very professional and multiple ballots were attempted to be returned but were denied unless accompanied by the necessary acknowledgement.

Member Hallam asked about Nikki Haley appearing on the ballot as a presidential candidate. Mr. Voye indicated that the Haley campaign suspended its activities but never formally withdrew.

Member Hallam also asked about local poll worker training to permit non-citizens to vote. Mr. Voye indicated that the training is to turn no one away. That every person has the right to vote provisionally and that person's ability to have their vote cast, in full or in part, is determined by the Return Board after the election.

Member Hallam asked about voter rolls and the posting of the activities that the County must engage in under federal and state law regarding voter registrations being moved to inactive or being removed entirely and requested posting of these procedures on the website. Mr. Voye indicated that Elections was working on that posting.

Member Hallam indicated that she had heard from Ms. Zavan who was excited that the secrecy envelopes for mail-in and absentee ballots were yellow, making them more visible and further asked whether observers have to stand at large distances from activities and whether anything changed. Mr. Voye indicated that there are large video monitors in both observer areas and nothing else has changed. Director Garofolo indicated that there are more cameras than ever. Member DeMarco indicated that there are now 91 cameras in the Elections Warehouse.

Member Hallam asked if the County could provide the public with more detail as to improvements in the warehouse.

Director Garofolo indicated that recreation of damaged and unscannable ballots are approximately 4 feet from observers. Mr. Opsitnick indicated that it was probably closer to 6 feet and, when asked, County personnel recreating these ballots would show the original ballot and the recreated ballot to observers.

Member Hallam asked about a purported Pennsylvania Board of Elections letter referred to by one of the public speakers. Mr. Voye indicated that there is no such Board and Boards of Elections are county-only and that while this was likely a mailing by a private group, a disclaimer is required so that the disclaimer can be reviewed and traced back to the funding source.

Member Hallam asked about zero tapes being posted at polling places. Mr. Voye replied that Act 77 changed that mandate, but that Allegheny County still urges Boards to post the zero tapes at the polling place.

Member Hallam asked about the official ballot versus voted ballot issue. Mr. Opsitnick provided an explanation that voted ballots are official ballots but that, once voted, they become contents of a ballot box under the Election Code.

Member Hallam asked about posting of any written election procedures, Mr. Opsitnick replied that will be done post-election.

Member Hallam asked about County Office Building voting and voting over the counter until tomorrow. Mr. Voye explained the process and how voter registration is researched at the County Office Building lobby site.

Mr. Voye indicated that, at the County Office Building site, two people are present. One person prints the ballots for over-the-counter voting.

Member Hallam asked about training of all poll workers assigned, Mr. Voye indicated that online, on demand training is available in addition to live training that takes place through the following weekend.

Member Hallam asked how many County employees will be involved in local Election Boards. Director Garofolo replied about 150 and that the County employees used are non 24/7 emergency personnel, beginning with people that have asked to serve. In addition, County has a bullpen of people aware of possible deployment. That bullpen is approximately 25 people.

Member Hallam asked about a ballot cure list and what Elections is doing. Mr. Harhut said that beginning with this election rejected ballots are scanned into the SURE which would notify voters who have applied by email and County would consider a list of all voters with ballots needing to cure in the future.

Chair Innamorato requested Elections to provide various options regarding the cure process. Director Garofolo and Mr. Opsitnick indicated that that would occur. Member DeMarco asked to explain the process of "purging". Mr. Voye indicated that a letter is mailed in January to inactive voters but that before a voter is removed from voter rolls, they have to be inactive or provide no contact for two federal election cycles. Mr. Voye also explained the PA Department of Health procedure where deceased voters are removed but in cases of multiple names or names that do not match with provided dates of birth, the County permits those voters to remain on the rolls.

Member DeMarco inquired about the 90-day pre-election prohibition to change voter rolls. Mr. Voye confirmed.

Member Hallam requested as to the status of mail-in/absentee applications and whether the applications were backlogged. Mr. Voye indicated that there is one-day turnaround.

Chair Innamorato asked about County's quality assurance efforts. Director Garofolo indicated our current vendor uses a camera to optimize proper names and addresses. Elections also sends a letter to candidates before ballot printing to verify name usage and spelling and that County stats compares the vendor file with the County's own file.

Chair Innamorato mentioned comments about voter intimidation at the County 911 ballot return site. Director Garofolo indicated that as these ballot return sites are not polling places rules still exist to prohibit campaigning, signage and related activities outside and inside of the ballot return site.

Chair Innamorato asked about new voting districts in Moon. Mr. Voye indicated that three were added and that any voter affected received a new voter ID by mail, including information on their current polling place.

Member Hallam inquired about the Return Board and was informed that Return Board will be sworn in on Friday, April 19 at 9:00 AM.

It was indicated that the next scheduled Board of Elections meeting is on Monday, May 13 at 10:00 AM in the Gold Room to certify the results of the April 23 Primary.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn. Moved by Member DeMarco, seconded by Member Hallam. Vote 3-0. Meeting adjourned at approximately 4:10 PM.