

**BERKS COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS  
MEETING MINUTES  
August 22, 2024 – 11:00 A.M.**

**Michael S. Rivera, Chair  
Christian Y. Leinbach, Vice Chair  
Dante Santoni, Jr., Commissioner  
Anne Norton, Chief Clerk  
Christine M. Sadler, County Solicitor – not present  
Cody L. Kauffman, First Assistant County Solicitor**

**CALL TO ORDER: 11:00 A.M.**

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

The Board approved the minutes for the August 1, 2024, Election Board meeting as presented.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS**

None.

**Agenda Items**

**1. Discussion of Pending Challenges to Candidate Nominations**

First Assistant County Solicitor Cody Kauffman explained that the deadline for minor political parties and bodies to file candidate nominations had recently passed. As a result, a total of five objections were filed in Commonwealth Court against those nominations. He said three had already been decided and the candidates were removed. He said there were still pending challenges against the Constitution Party candidates and the We the People candidates.

Mr. Kauffman added that when the Court makes a ruling in these cases, the candidates have the opportunity to appeal the decision within 10 days of the ruling.

Commissioner Rivera said that the Election Board has no control over these cases, but they can affect when the County can begin printing ballots since the rulings can change the candidate list.

**2. PA Liquor Control Board Questionnaire**

Ms. Norton noted that there are no referendum questions set to appear on the 2024 General Election ballot in Berks related to PA Liquor Licenses.

On the motion of Commissioner Santoni, seconded by Commissioner Leinbach, the Board authorized Election Services to complete and submit the PA Liquor Control Board Questionnaire.

**3. Permanent Polling Place Change for the 2024 General Election**

On the motion of Commissioner Leinbach, seconded by Commissioner Santoni, the board approved the following permanent polling place change for the 2024 General Election.

## **Earl Township – Precinct 2**

**From:** Earl Township Building  
19 Schoolhouse Road  
Boyertown, PA 19512

**To:** Earl Township Fire Department  
1340 Ironstone Drive  
Boyertown, PA 19512

### **4. Election Day Additional County Staff Workers**

Ms. Norton explained that this request for additional County staff workers on Election Day is similar to what has been requested for past elections, but with increased numbers due to the anticipated increase in mail-in and absentee ballots.

The request includes 137 workers for the pre-canvassing and canvassing of mail-in and absentee ballots during three shifts at the SAM building, which includes 6 scanners and 5 POD captains. The request also included 24 workers in the voter Call Center and 20 precinct rovers.

On the motion of Commissioner Santoni, seconded by Commissioner Leinbach, the Board approved the compensation and shifts for additional County staff working on Election Day, November 5.

### **Election Director's Report**

Ms. Norton shared that the Election Services staff has processed roughly 2,000 new mail-in / absentee ballot applications over 7 days. She said these applications were received as far back as the April Primary and the staff works on the oldest ones first. The staff is currently up to July 1 for paper applications and up to Aug. 1 with the online applications, with roughly 5,000 left to be processed.

Ms. Norton shared that Election Services is working with the Berks County Library System on voter education efforts and provided various resources and documents for them to distribute to their 23 libraries. The library system is also hosting four in-person events at libraries and elections staff attended the first one at the Reading Public Library earlier in the week.

### **General Comments from the Board regarding current election-related issues**

Commissioner Santoni said that if the number of mail-in ballots will be high voters need to expect that results will not be available until later. He said there is still a secure process in place and the votes are still legitimate, but it may take longer to know the results than in the past. He also reminded voters to return their mail-in and absentee ballot applications as soon as possible.

Commissioner Rivera reminded voters to have a designated agent form with the mail-in / absentee ballot if the voter is unable to take their own ballot to a drop box. He also encouraged everyone to be respectful and have civility during what could be a heated election.

**Public Comment**

Jeffrey Wolfe, Brecknock Township, said he disagrees with early canvassing of mail-in ballots and believes it could lead to many problems. He said he agrees with Commissioner Santoni that voters need to be patient and should expect results to take longer to process the mail-in ballots.

Joe Alexander, Muhlenberg Township, requested an update on his concern from the 2024 Primary when he arrived at a polling place to serve as a poll watcher and observed that the voting machines had been set up before the doors were opened that morning.

Roxann Curran, Reading, relayed several questions she previously emailed to Election Services related to plans if polling places run out of power, illegal voters, and the voting machines. She also asked if the County would consider going back to paper ballots

Debbie Noel, Robeson Township, asked if someone from Election Services could give her a clearer understanding about mail-in ballots that need to have the voter's ID verified. She said she wants to help voters be proactive to provide the correct information before Election Day.

John Berg, Shillington, submitted an online comment. He said, "With the concern about election security, can we explain or address why we continue to use secret ballots. It seems their concerns would be addressed if everyone's vote could be confirmed. If you want to vote for a fascist you should stand by it."

Commissioner Leinbach said the last comment was one of the dumbest questions he's ever seen asked of the Election Board. He said the secret ballot is what the American election system is founded on and must always be preserved.

Commissioner Rivera said that Ms. Norton did look into Mr. Alexander's concern and could give him an update after the meeting. He added that he was aware that Ms. Curran had a previously scheduled meeting with Ms. Norton and could get the answers to her questions during that. Finally, he suggested Ms. Noel set up a time to meet with Ms. Norton about her questions.

**ADJOURNMENT** 11:46 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
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Anne Norton, Chief Clerk