

**BERKS COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
June 22, 2022 – 10:00 A.M.**

**Kevin S. Barnhardt, Chair**  
**Michael S. Rivera, Vice-Chair**  
**Christian Y. Leinbach, Commissioner**  
**Paige Riegner, Chief Clerk**  
**Christine M. Sadler, County Solicitor**  
**Cody L. Kauffman, First Assistant County Solicitor**

**CALL TO ORDER- 10:00 A.M.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Board approved the minutes for the June 6, 2022 Special Election Board meeting as presented.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS**

Debbie Noel of Robeson Township spoke on behalf of the Democratic Committee, indicating support for measures to increase voter turnout. To that end, she also expressed support for current agenda items # 2 and #3, adding postage to mail-in and absentee ballot return envelopes and adding another ballot drop box to Berks County's South campus, respectively. Ms. Noel added that a full-service branch of the Election Services office possibly located at South campus is supported, but not moving the entire office out of the Berks County Services Center.

Adrian Jadic of Wyomissing Borough spoke in support of current agenda items #2 and #3, adding postage to mail-in and absentee ballot return envelopes and adding a ballot collection site at South Campus, respectively. Mr. Jadic also supports Sunday ballot drop off times.

**AGENDA ITEMS:**

**1. Recertification of Official Votes**

First Assistant County Solicitor Cody Kauffman explained that the Department of State is requesting a separate certification which includes undated ballots. As it stands, a recent court order does not specifically cite certifying undated ballots. At this point, the Department of State finds itself in the difficult position of making a judgement call whether or not to certify undated ballots. The Department of State cannot act without the certification of undated ballots from individual counties.

Commissioner Leinbach does not support supplying undated ballot totals to be certified as current law states dates are not immaterial. Commissioner Barnhardt spoke on record that he thinks the Elections office should comply with the Department of State's request for recertification. Commissioner Rivera feels the County has already complied with the recent court order, sees no need to recertify.

Commissioner Barnhardt's motion to comply with the Department of State's request was met with no agreement. The matter will most likely be revisited.

**2. Postage for Mail-in and Absentee Ballots**

On the motion from Commissioner Barnhardt, seconded by Commissioner Rivera, the Board approved adding postage to Mail-in and Absentee ballot return envelopes.

**3. Mail-in and Absentee Ballot Collection Site**

On the motion by Commissioner Leinbach, seconded by Commissioner Rivera with an amendment, the Board approved adding a ballot drop box at the County's South Campus and Sunday drop-off hours prior to the election for all drop box locations.

**4. Judge of Election and Poll Worker Training**

Commissioner Barnhardt presented a pilot training program, which would train all 202 Judges of Election who in turn will train their election day poll workers. This includes a more intensive hands-on approach on how to set up, monitor, troubleshoot, shut down, and securely return the Electronic Poll books on election night. No action is requested in this meeting.

Commissioner Rivera agreed more hands on training is needed, as well as detailed training videos, and a training manual. Commissioner Leinbach stated the report of the independent investigation will be unveiled shortly. Training will ensure errors which occurred in the Primary will not be repeated.

Elections Director Paige Riegner stated the Elections office has been reaching out to poll workers for feedback and suggestions. There are four days reserved for training over the summer, two in July and two in August. Stephanie Weaver will also be working on poll worker training videos for the Elections office.

**5. County Employee Recruitment for November Election**

The Elections office needs more Rovers and volunteers to open ballots on election day. All three Commissioners agree no motion required, and leave it up to the Elections office to determine how many additional volunteers are needed and to provide proper training.

**6. Ballot Printer Update**

On the motion from Commissioner Barnhardt, seconded by Commissioner Rivera, the Board approved an invitation to bid for the 2023 Primary as well as consider printing ballots internally, all contingent on Act 77. Motion amended to look into current printer's potential to drop shipping ballots in Reading.

**7. Policy No. EL-2022-09**

On the motion from Commissioner Leinbach, seconded by Commissioner Rivera, the Board authorized the implementation of Election Policy No. EL-2022-09, which addresses electioneering inside Berks County polling locations. Under this policy, individuals wearing political, or candidate attire, or accessories should not be interpreted as electioneering. However, election officials, poll workers, poll watchers, or overseers are not permitted to wear political or candidate items. Verbally advocating or distributing literature in favor of or against a political party, a political body, candidate, or ballot question is prohibited inside the polling location.

**8. Report of Director of Election Services**

Elections Director Paige Riegner plans a post-Primary reorganization of the Elections office, including current job duties, additional staff, space reorganization, updating and implementing office procedures.

Rex Levensgood, Director of Facilities, spoke on the stress on his department and staff stemming from providing support to the Elections office around election time. Mr. Levensgood is seeking support and positive changes going forward.

On the motion from Commissioner Leinbach, seconded by Commissioner Rivera, the Board authorized County Chief Administrative Officer Ronald Seaman, Kelly Laubach, and Rex Levensgood review prior contracts for moving companies and get proposals which would provide support for both the Elections office and the Facilities department.

**General Comments from the Board of Elections Regarding Current Election-Related Issues**

**CITIZEN COMMENT**

None

**ADJOURNMENT** – 11:27 A.M.