

Board of Elections
Office

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Carroll County Board of Elections
Board Minutes
June 19, 2020

Present:

Board

Griffith Manahan, President
Laura O'Callaghan, Vice-President
John Woodley, Secretary
Harvey Tegeler
Samuel Foster

Staff

Katherine Berry, Election Director
Paula Troxell, Deputy Director

Attorney

Jay Gullo

Call to Order & Welcome:

Mr. Manahan, President, called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. A quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes:

The Board approved the minutes from the June 12, 2020 meeting, on a motion from Mr. Woodley, seconded by Ms. O'Callaghan. The motion carried unanimously.

Attorney Report:

Mr. Gullo reported that SBE is asking the LBE attorneys to focus on the National Federation of the Blind lawsuit. He explained that he has discussed this suit with Ms. Berry, and he feels there is nothing for the board to worry about.

Staff Report:

Voter Registration:

The office used SBE's call center for the primary election and it may be used for the general election if the connectivity problems have been corrected. The call center took approximately 258 calls for the office from May 1st through June 4th. This allowed the staff to focus on processing the vote by mail ballots. Ms. Berry explained that when the call center was unable to assist the voter, they would transfer the call to the office.

Ms. Berry reported that the office processed 784 address changes between May 4th and May 27th. Many of the address changes were from the vote by mail ballots that were returned by the post office with a yellow sticker that provided a different address. There were an additional 2,671 undeliverable ballots which included out-of-state addresses, return to sender with no address information and temporarily away.

Ms. Berry is sending a letter of explanation to the voters that voted provisionally because the pollbook indicated that the voter had already voted. She has a copy of the letter if anyone would like to see it.

SBE is looking for other ways that they can get more accurate registration data. The data must be received from a “agency”. Funeral homes may not be an option to report death notices because they are not considered an “agency”. Mr. Tegeler asked if the Social Security database that includes death records has been discussed. He explained that this database is used by insurance agents for death benefits. Ms. Berry will ask SBE about this database.

There are members of the State Board that have suggested to mail post cards before a vote by mail ballot is sent to alert the voter that a ballot is coming, and the mailing could also be used to check addresses. Ms. Berry provided a brief overview of the State Board meeting and the legislative hearing that Ms. Lamone was asked to attend.

Vote By Mail:

Ms. Berry reported that the office received 4,732 ballots in the drop boxes between May 18th and June 2nd. SBE is looking into getting more drop boxes for the general election because of their popularity. Some LBE offices reported that more than half of their ballots were placed in the drop boxes.

Ms. Berry said that ballots received from the post office and the drop boxes were held for a 24-hour quarantine. The quarantine continued until approximately four days before Election Day when all ballots were required to be received in the voter registration data base daily.

The office accepted 423 web delivered ballots. Ms. Berry reminded everyone that these ballots must be duplicated, and she then explained how they are canvassed.

Approximately 87 voters were sent a new ballot because of making an error on their first ballot. Ms. Berry explained that the reason the number is approximate is because the staff did not have time to continue to track when they reissued a ballot.

Ms. Berry stated that nine voters were sent to the Attorney General’s office for voting twice.

Ms. Berry reported that 173 voters were contacted because they did not sign the oath on their voted ballot.

Ms. Berry stated that there were many lessons learned for canvass with a primarily by mail election that can be improved upon for the general election. MAEO will be holding a lesson learned on June 25th. Ms. Berry will be conducting a lesson learned for the staff on July 1st so that the surveys received from SBE can be completed.

SBE is considering the possibility of vote by mail ballots having three envelopes in order to preserve the privacy of the voter's oath. SBE is asking for feedback from each LBE. Ms. Berry is working on a response. She explained the different versions of envelopes used in past elections.

IT/Warehouse:

Ms. Berry reported that the yearly inventory has been completed.

Post-election maintenance will occur after the SBE releases the voting equipment.

Ms. Berry reported that she has not provided approval to certify the election in MDVOTERS.

Polling Places & Election Judges:

Ms. Berry stated that the two vote centers that were used were the Westminster Senior Center and the South Carroll Swim Club. SBE is discussing utilizing additional vote centers if the vote by mail model extends into November.

Ms. Berry will be reaching out to Fairhaven and Carroll Lutheran Village in July about usage of their facility as polling places in the event we have a regular election.

Election judge compensation was \$34,000 this included an extra \$50.00 for in-person judges at the vote centers, judges that worked during canvass and training pay for all judges who had attended training prior to the State of Emergency. Ms. Berry reported that the postage cost for vote by mail ballots was \$21,000 and the county should receive approximately half (\$10,000) back from SBE. She also explained that approximately \$251,000 of her budget will be returned to county's general fund. Ms. Berry further explained that she is unsure if she will be allowed to hire a county contractual for the general election because of the hiring freeze. A brief discussion occurred about staffing concerns of the office and the large amount of funds being returned to the county. The board requested that Ms. Berry provide an analysis of the staff's overtime for a vote by mail election as compared to an in-person election.

SBE will be sending a survey of the PPE and other supplies that will be needed in the event there is an in-person election. These supplies include plexiglass screens, gloves, masks, disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer. Ms. Berry stated that additional staff may need to be hired through the state's staffing contract to assist election judges with setup of the plexiglass screens. She also stated that transportation cost may increase because of the additional supplies that need to be deployed.

Ms. Berry stated that a follow-up with the Sheriff's Department will occur after it is decided what type of election will be held. She wanted to thank the Sheriff's Department for their presence each night from 7:00 p.m. until 7:00 a.m. at all three drop box locations and the all-day presence at the vote centers.

Personnel/Budget:

As stated earlier, the staff's overtime increased for the primary election in comparison to a comparable primary election.

Ms. Berry reported that the vacant permanent position has not been filled because the State required the office to postpone the interviews. She is working with the State HR to fill the position by mid-September.

Since charter government decisions could have an impact on the office, Ms. Berry will be closely monitoring the Commissioner meetings in June and July to see if it is discussed.

The MAEO meeting will be held August 23rd through August 26th. Ms. Berry needs to know who plans on attending the conference.

Ms. Berry reminded the board that the October and November dates listed in her Director's report will be required if the general election is held normally.

Mr. Manahan asked for a discussion regarding the letter that was created on behalf of the Board that will be sent to the Governor's office. There was no further discussion and Ms. O'Callaghan made a motion to accept and send the letter; seconded by Mr. Tegeler who stated that the letter should be emailed to the Governor, SBE representatives, elected officials and both central committees. The motion carried unanimously.

Board Members Political Activities:

None

Unfinished Business:

Ms. Berry will ask SBE about using the Social Security database that contains death records.

Ms. Berry will provide an analysis of the staff's overtime for a vote by mail election as compared to an in-person election.

New Business:

None

Scheduling of Next Meeting:

The next board meeting will be held on Wednesday July 15, 2020, at 10:00 a.m.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Mr. Foster; seconded by Ms. O'Callaghan to adjourn the meeting at 11:57 a.m. The motion passed unanimously.