

## **MINUTES**

### **City of Charlottesville Electoral Board Meeting of Aug 23, 2018**

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 5:48 pm on Thursday, Aug 23, 2018 in the office of the Charlottesville General Registrar. Those present were Electoral Board members Anne Hemenway (Chair), Jon Bright (Vice Chair), and Jim Nix (Secretary), General Registrar Rosanna Bencoach, Deputy Registrar Katie Mauller and Election Manager Melissa Morton.

On a motion by the Chair, seconded by the Vice Chair, the agenda was approved unanimously without change.

On a motion by the Chair, seconded by the Vice Chair, the minutes of the July 30, 2018 meeting were unanimously approved without change.

#### **Public Comment**

There were no members of the public present at this meeting.

#### **Election Office Employee procedures with the City HR Office**

The Chair reported on recent meetings with the City Manager and Human Resources Director regarding procedures available to employees of the registrar's office for addressing their concerns. Since these employees have no access to normal grievance procedures it was determined that they should direct any complaints or concerns to the HR Director who would bring them to the attention of the City Manager who would, in turn, relay them to the Electoral Board.

#### **Risk Limiting Audit – Report on Pilot Audit by City of Fairfax**

The Secretary and the Election Manager summarized what they learned at the event and suggested the possibility of conducting a pilot risk limiting audit (RLA) in Charlottesville of the Primary election to be held on June 11, 2019. The Secretary added information provided by Peter Lichtenheld of Hart Intercivic over the phone and by email. According to Mr. Lichtenfeld, the Hart Verity voting system used in Charlottesville, and a number of other Virginia jurisdictions, can produce the type of cast vote record necessary to conduct audits and the company is interested in participating in a pilot audit by one or more of its Virginia customers.

The pilot RLA by the City of Fairfax was conducted as a trial of three different types of audit, each of which necessitated access to the original cast ballots for examination by

audit judges. The Vice Chair pointed out that the Verity system creates and stores complete images of each ballot and that examination of those images by the judges might prove to be a satisfactory alternative to examining the actual paper ballots. This would be more efficient and eliminate issues of ballot security.

### **Update on Electronic Poll Books**

Election Manager Melissa Morton presented information on options for replacing our aging electronic poll books (EPBs). VR Systems, the poll book vendor we have used for some time, can provide suitable lap top computers along with the software upgrade we need but Ms. Morton has found a suitable computer model available locally for about half the price of those offered by VR Systems. She will investigate further to confirm that these will run the VR software and that they will fit the cases we have on hand for the EPBs. If that is the case, we will be able to replace all of our EPBs and their software before the next Presidential election using Capital Improvement Funds already approved and available.

### **Appointment of Election Officials**

Ms. Morton presented applications from six individuals wishing to become election officials. The board reviewed these applications and, on a motion by the Chair, seconded by the Secretary and unanimously approved, the following were appointed:

Bryna L. Johnson  
Celia R. Thompson  
Rebecca K. Hill  
Louisa J. Candelario  
Heather Higgins  
Dashad Morton

Ms. Morton also reported that election officer assignments for the November 6 election are on track and that experienced chiefs have been appointed for every precinct. Other key positions have also been filled with only a single assistant chief and one closer position yet to be assigned. She will employ a mix of new and experienced election officials for this election in order to continue building an experienced team.

Ms. Morton informed the Board members that adjustments in election official pay rates were required in order to comply with a recent City Council decision to raise the minimum wage for City employees from \$13.79 to \$14.40 per hour. She presented the Board with a proposed new pay scale reflecting this change for the lowest paid EOs along with similar upward adjustments in the rates for the higher skilled, higher responsibility officials. The Chair moved to approve these pay increases, the Vice Chair seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

In response to requests from several senior election officials following the June primary, Assistant Registrar Joyce McKenney has been working on an outline of Election Day duties in notebook form organized for easy reference by precinct chiefs, assistants and closers. The draft will be circulated to EOs before being finalized.

In a final item under this heading Ms. Morton provided the Board members with a comprehensive Election Emergency Contact Information directory. This directory provides phone and email contact information for the Board members and key office personnel as well as all City officials who may have role in supporting the election. The Chair emphasized that it is the responsibility of the General Registrar to contact each of the listed City government officials and review their responsibilities prior to the election.

### **Election Office Staffing Update**

The Registrar and Deputy Registrar provided the Board members with an update on the status of the hiring action to fill a vacancy created by a recent departure. Interviews are scheduled for next week with the expectation of a mid-September reporting date for the new employee. Initial steps have also been taken to hire a seasonal part-time voting equipment technician.

The Chair emphasized the need for maximum cross-training among the office staff to improve efficiency and ensure the flexibility to cover for absences by key personnel. This cultivation of talent should also lead to enhanced job satisfaction and improved morale. The Registrar asserted that the text of job descriptions impose some limits on cross training but others present pointed out that the standard "other duties as assigned" wording in these job descriptions should provide the needed assignment flexibility.

### **Executive Session**

At 7:30 p.m. there was a motion by the Chair to close the meeting for the purpose of conducting a discussion of personnel matters. This motion was seconded by the Secretary and approved unanimously.

The board reconvened in open session at 7:55 p.m. and the Chair moved to certify, by recorded vote, that only matters exempted from the open meeting requirements were discussed in the closed session. This motion was seconded by the Vice-chair and approved unanimously. Copies of the motion closing the meeting and the certification following the closed session are attached to these minutes.

### **Further Discussion of Office Staffing**

There followed a prolonged discussion of issues related to the responsibilities of the various members of the staff, office morale and the challenges of preparing for the

upcoming election with the anticipated absence of one senior member for extended sick leave. The Board members reiterated their desires for maximum flexibility in duty assignments and extensive cross-training.

**Next meeting**

The next meeting will take place in the office of the Charlottesville General Registrar at noon on Friday, September 14, 2018 in conjunction with public Logic and Accuracy testing in preparation for the start of absentee voting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted:*

James Nix, Secretary

Anne Hemenway, Chair

Jon Bright, Vice Chair