

MINUTES
Fairfax County Electoral Board
February 29, 2024

The Fairfax County Electoral Board (Board) met on Thursday, February 29, 2024, in Conference Room 315 at the Fairfax County Government Center located at 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. Chairman Hon. Katherine K. Hanley; Vice Chairman Jeffrey K. Shapiro; Secretary Amb. (ret.) Christopher P. Henzel; General Registrar Eric L. Spicer; Deputy Director Cheryl Jones; and Clerk to the Electoral Board Beth Dixon Methfessel were present.

Public Information Officer Brian Worthy; IT Manager Cord Whitehouse; Election Manager Ravi Udeshi; Deputy Registrar for Voter Registration Bushra Ardalan; Deputy Registrar for Voter Satellite Offices Florence Brown; Voting Equipment and Logistics Manager Tyrone Allen; Deputy Registrar for Absentee Voting Sean Stewart; Training and Operations Manager Sean Rogers; Election Officer Manager Gretchen Coleman; Financial Specialist Teresa Maza; Communications Manager Sarah Prowitt; Supply Manager Kay Garrison; Antemira Elliot, Ann Hines, Lisa Hogle, Sherry Kirk, and Jean Thoensen (Office of Elections (Office) staff and/or rovers); Arina van Breda (Director, Voter Registration and Voter Information League of Women Voters (LWV) - Fairfax); Maggi Luca (LWV – Fairfax); Christine Brim (Fairfax County Republican Committee (FCRC) Election Integrity Task Force); Pat O'Brien (member FCRC); Gregory Brandon (Fairfax County Democratic Committee (FCDC) Central Communications); Richard Chew (member FCDC); and Kathy Lewis (resident of Fairfax County).

The following individuals participated using the Zoom videoconferencing platform: Human Resources Manager Yoon Choi-Lee; FOIA Coordinator Pat Ferguson; Office staff and/or rovers Nazila Arefi, Kurt Doehnert, Gary Klinger, Alejandra Malanowski, Ann Palermo, Dan Per-Lee, Sany Raedels, Todd Strelow, Bill Turley, and Fily Vilasanta; Maria Vorel (FCDC Precinct Operations); Carol Allen and Stephen Spitz (members FCDC); Helen Chaikovsky, Phyllisa Goldenberg, Mark Beale, and Mark Lenz (Fairfax County election officers and/or residents of Fairfax County or neighboring jurisdictions).

Ms. Hanley called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. and introduced the Board. Mr. Henzel moved approval of the agenda, and the motion passed by a vote of 3-0.

Mr. Henzel moved to adopt the Draft Minutes of the Board meeting held on January 18, 2024. By a vote of 3-0, the Minutes of the Board meeting held on January 18, 2024, were adopted.

Mr. Henzel made a motion to appoint 390 election officers (EO) (125 Democrats, 137 Republicans, and 128 Unaffiliated) for a term ending February 28, 2025. Mr. Henzel asked Mr. Spicer if the recruitment goals were met for the upcoming Presidential Party Primaries. Mr. Spicer confirmed that 2,050 EOs have been assigned and there is an adequate number of EOs in reserve to handle cancellations. The motion passed by a vote of 3-0.

Under the General Registrar’s (GR) report dated February 29, 2024 (attached and made a part of this record), Mr. Spicer updated the voter registration numbers since the last Electoral Board meeting:

Voter Registration

Registered Voters	As of February 26, 2024	Change from 1/16
Active registered voters	727,329	+3,498
Inactive registered voters	66,243	-703
TOTAL	793,572	+2,795

Registration Transactions	January 2024 (1/1 to 1/31)	Year-to-Date 2024 (1/1 to 1/31)
DMV online voter registration transactions	15,460	15,460
Web voter registration transactions	1,980	1,980
Third-party voter transactions	568	568
Other voter registration transactions	1,251	1,251
TOTAL	19,259	19,259

Voter Cancellations	January 2024 (1/1 to 1/31)	Year-to-Date 2024 (1/1 to 1/31)
Deceased	482	482
Out-of-state	260	260
Other	68	68
TOTAL	810	810

Breakdown of DMV Transactions	January 2024 (1/1 to 1/31)
Change of Address	2,444
New Registrant	2,996
Transferred In	1,183
Administrative Duplicate Match	4,299
Name and/or Address Change	242
Other (Includes voters who moved out of Fairfax County, moved out of the state, were reactivated, or identified themselves as non-citizens)	4,296
Total DMV Transactions	15,460

On December 5, 2023, the Board of Supervisors approved the permanent relocation of the polling place for Greenspring precinct to Village Square. Approval from the Attorney General's office was received on February 5, and the Office mailed a notice to voters in Greenspring precinct (this is the same location assigned temporarily for the last two elections).

The Office recently learned that in November 2023 the Fairfax County Park Authority changed the name of the Oak Marr Recreation Center, polling place for Island Pond (188 voters) precinct, to the Oakmont Recreation Center. After consulting with the county attorneys, this action does not require a notification to voters because the Park Authority initiated the name change. No action was taken by the Board of Supervisors. The name has been updated in VERIS and will be changed on all election documents.

As of February 26, 39,723 absentee ballot applications have been approved for the March 2024 Democratic Presidential Primary Election. This includes 38,131 permanent applications, 607 applications from overseas and military voters, and 985 one-time applications. As of February 26, 8,963 absentee ballot applications have been approved for the March 2024 Republican Presidential Primary Election. This includes 8,010 permanent applications, 233 applications from overseas and military voters, and 720 one-time applications. To receive a ballot for primary elections, a permanent absentee voter must indicate on their application that they would like to vote in primary elections and select a party.

As of February 26, 1,057 absentee mail ballots have been returned by the USPS as undeliverable. The receipt of an undeliverable ballot is noted in the voter's VERIS (Virginia Election Registration and Information System) record in, and the returned envelope is processed in the same way as other undeliverable mail.

The statutory requirement that removed the witness requirement on the "statement of absentee voter" on absentee ballot envelopes and replaced it with the last four digits of the voter's Social Security number and year of birth has added to the overall expense of absentee voting. To comply with the new law, a perforated security flap to protect the voter's sensitive information was added to the return absentee ballot envelope. This significantly increased the price of each envelope. Additionally, because the security flap needs to be removed to confirm the accuracy of the SSN and year of birth with the voter's record in VERIS prior to recording its receipt, the time required to process returned ballot envelopes has doubled. There was concern that the security flap would not arrive intact after going through the postal system, however, the Office can report that this has not been the case.

An additional 13 locations opened on Saturday, February 24. All locations will be open through Saturday, March 2.

Numerous in-person training classes have been offered for this election, including workshops for chiefs and SDR specialists, and equipment practice sessions for first-time EOs. In addition, open houses will provide optional opportunities for additional practice, including one for chiefs and assistant chiefs on Tuesday, February 27 and one for all EOs on Thursday, February 29. More than 850 EOs have attended in-person training for this election or are enrolled in an upcoming open house.

Sarah Prowitt, formerly employed as the Program Manager: Compliance, Outreach and Policy for DC Health, started on February 26 in the Communications Specialist III position. Sherry Kirk successfully competed for the Administrative Assistant V, Voter Services/SDR Assistant Manager position, effective February 10. Lisa Hogle successfully competed for the Management Analyst I, Candidate Services Manager position under the Voter Services/SDR Division, effective March 9.

The barcode inventory system will be replaced with one that utilizes an RFID tracking system. Initially planned for a March rollout, supply chain issues delayed the project start. With all equipment now delivered, the vendor has been onsite to observe the L&A process. The system is on track for a June rollout.

Under the Chairman's report, Ms. Hanley visited the EO Open House and commended staff for providing these extra training sessions. She remarked that Fairfax County EOs respond enthusiastically to additional opportunities to enhance their skills.

Under the Vice Chairman's report, Mr. Shapiro commented that "great things are happening in the Office." Staff proved themselves during the challenging November 2023 election, and he welcomed the new personnel. The activities organized to improve efficiency and transparency have created a great team and he commended the result, concluding that this is "an Office on its way up."

There was no Secretary's report.

Under New Business, Ms. Hanley introduced the draft of the EO Code of Conduct (attached and made a part of this record). Mr. Shapiro asked what prompted the creation of the document. Ms. Coleman responded that this effort consolidated the rules and policies for EO conduct into one central document to provide a clear set of expectations for what it entails to serve as an EO. Mr. Shapiro suggested adding introductory language explaining that the Office has concluded that these are the best practices for EOs to follow in order to create a good working atmosphere. Ms. Hanley suggested that the document remained unchanged but to incorporate Mr. Shapiro's suggestions into a cover memo to accompany the Code of Conduct. Mr. Henzel moved to adopt the Code of Conduct with the suggested addition of the cover memo. The motion passed by a vote of 3-0.

Under Public Comments, Ms. Hanley reminded the public that comments are limited to three minutes. The Board may provide the information; however, if more research is required, the Board may defer an answer. The Board may also request a written submission of the comment or inquiry.

There were no Public Comments.

Ms. Hanley moved that the Board go into Closed Session move that the Board enter into a Closed Session to discuss the award of a public contract involving the expenditure of public funds on voting equipment where the discussion of the terms or scope of such contracts if held in open session would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body, as permitted by Va. Code § 2.2-3711(A)(29); and to discuss or consider the

investment of public funds where competition or bargaining is involved, where, if made public initially, the financial interest of the governmental unit would be adversely affected, as permitted by Va. Code § 24.2-3711(A)(6). The motion passed 3-0, and the Board entered a Closed Session at 4:26 p.m.

At 5:13 p.m. the Board concluded the Closed Session. Chairman Hanley read the following statement:

“In accordance with *Virginia Code* § 2.2-3712(D), I am asking the Secretary of the Electoral Board to conduct a roll call vote to certify that to the best of each member’s knowledge that (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act were conducted in the closed meeting and (ii) only such public business as was identified in the motion for the closed meeting, by which the closed meeting was convened, was heard, discussed or considered in the closed meeting of the Electoral Board. That roll call vote shall be recorded and included in the minutes of the Electoral Board.”

Secretary Henzel then called the roll for the vote on the above statement:

Voting Yes:	Chairman Hanley
	Vice Chairman Shapiro
	Secretary Henzel

Mr. Henzel moved that the recommendations of the General Registrar outlined in his February 29, 2024, memorandum to the Electoral Board (attached and made a part of this record) be accepted and to continue the procurement process for securing new voting equipment from ES&S and new electronic pollbooks from KNOWiNK. The motion passed by a vote of 3-0.

Mr. Shapiro moved to adjourn. The motion carried, and without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 5:16 p.m.

Attachments

Hon. Katherine K. Hanley, Chairman

Jeffrey K. Shapiro, Vice Chairman

Amb. (ret.) Christopher P. Henzel, Secretary

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