

MINUTES  
Fairfax County Electoral Board  
February 6, 2018

The Fairfax County Electoral Board met on Tuesday, February 6, 2018, in Conference Room 315 at the Fairfax County Government Center located at 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. Chairman Stephen M. Hunt, Vice Chairman Seth T. Stark, Secretary Katherine K. Hanley, General Registrar Cameron Glenn Sasnett, Deputy Registrar Gary Scott, Assistant Registrar Viki Kinsman, Deputy County Attorney Erin Ward, Assistant County Attorney Martin R. Desjardins, Public Information Officer Lisa Connors, and Clerk to the Board Beth Dixon Methfessel were present. Keith Damon representing the Fairfax County Republican Committee (FCRC); Brian McConville representing the Fairfax County Democratic Committee (FCDC); Jim Lyle, member of FCRC; John Farrell member of FCDC; Olga Hernandez, Therese Martin, and Judy Helein, representing the Fairfax League of Women Voters (LWV); Fairfax County residents Jean Thoensen, and Rachael Hamlet; and Stafford Ward with Psephos Strategies, attended the Electoral Board meeting. Various Office of Elections (Office) staff members were also present at the Electoral Board meeting.

Mr. Hunt called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and introduced himself, Vice Chairman Stark and Secretary Hanley (Board.) Mr. Hunt called for a motion to approve the February 6, 2018 meeting agenda. Mr. Stark moved to approve the agenda, and by a vote of 3-0, the agenda was adopted.

Mr. Hunt asked for approval of the Draft Minutes of the Electoral Board meeting held on January 10, 2018. Ms. Hanley moved for approval, with the following corrections; page 2, paragraph 2, remove the word “out”; and page 7, paragraph 7, replace “Voter Guide” with “Facts for Voters.” By a vote of 3-0, the January 10, 2018, Minutes, as corrected, were adopted.

Mr. Sasnett recognized Clerk to the Board Beth Dixon Methfessel for the quality of her work on the January 10, 2018 minutes. The Board agreed, and Mr. Stark moved to officially recognize Ms. Methfessel. The motion passed by a vote of 3:0.

Mr. Hunt asked for a motion to appoint 4,781 election officers (2,441 Democrats, 796 Independents, and 1,544 Republicans) for a two-year term beginning March 1, 2018 and ending February 29, 2020. Ms. Hanley moved to adopt the 4,781 election officer appointments as presented, for a term beginning March 1, 2018, and ending February 29, 2020. By a vote of 3-0, the Board appointed 4,781 individuals (2,441 Democrats, 796 Independents, and 1,544 Republicans) to serve as election officers. Ms. Hanley reminded the parties that although new appointment information will be sent out to the 4,781 newly appointed election officers, not everyone will accept a new appointment. Mr. Farrell asked if the Office would provide a list of those not accepting reappointment. The Board agreed to provide this information. FCRC sent an email dated February 6, 2018, suggesting enhancements to the party portals in PollChief (the election management system) that will

keep the lists up-to-date and accurate (attached and made a part of this record). Ms. Hanley responded that the budget must be taken into consideration before implementing any changes to PollChief.

Under the General Registrar's Report dated February 6, 2018, attached and made a part of this record, the election officer recruitment and training plan will be addressed more fully in the next several weeks. This will allow time for the new Election Manager Eric Spicer to participate in the interviewing and selection of the Election Officer Manager. Training of election officers for the May and June elections will be given priority [pursuant to Va. Code 24.2-115.2]. As identified in the Department of Justice review of various Fairfax County polling places in November 2017, plans are being discussed to review fluency of bilingual election officers, specifically those who identified themselves as bilingual Spanish.

With respect to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) transactions, Mr. Sasnett explained that Chris Piper, the new Commissioner of Elections, would like time to assess the current issues/problems, including the possibility that data may have been removed from voter registration records. Given the number of entities involved in resolving these matters, Mr. Sasnett asked that the Board wait before contacting the Attorney General (Board Action taken at the January 10, 2018, Electoral Board meeting.) Mr. Piper will provide an update on Thursday, January 11, 2018. Mr. Sasnett reported that in compliance with Board action from the January 10, 2018, Electoral Board meeting, all pending transactions have been processed.

With respect to the 2018 Legislative Update, Mr. Sasnett reported that he has attended a number of legislative sessions. Discussion ensued over bills dealing with voting system audit standards, realigning the State Board of Elections (SBE), redistricting, early voting, and the write-in certification threshold. Ms. Hanley commented that she did not think the County had taken a position on any of the election-related bills moving through the 2018 session.

With respect to the Office Update, under Voter Registration, Mr. Sasnett reported that the number of electronic transactions now exceed paper transactions by 15 to one. Mr. Sasnett met with Matt Miller from GIS to discuss the anomalies of voters assigned in the wrong district. Three Office staff members will assist GIS in reviewing these discrepancies.

Under Election Administration, ballot bin recovery from the courthouse will begin on February 7, 2018. New appointment letters will be prepared and mailed in late January/early February. Mr. Sasnett suggested that a stamped, return envelope be included to facilitate the prompt return of this material. Ms. Hanley asked for a cost estimate for including the envelope.

Under Technology and Innovations, in January, Election Systems & Software (ES&S) conducted electionware training, including how to build the ballot. Microsoft is changing the licensure for their products from "device" to "user" and as such, staff needs must be evaluated in order to determine the appropriate license. When equipment is upgraded, staff will move from desktops to laptops. Fairfax County has upgraded their website, and all links are now operational.

Under Accountability and Standards, Mr. Sasnett and Ms. Hanley met with the Department of Human Resources (DHR) to discuss the implementation of a 5-step Election Specialist series. Comparable jurisdictions from inside and outside Virginia with similar positions will be used to develop the series. Eric Spicer was selected as the new Election Manager. He will assist in the interview process for the Election Officer Manager to begin on February 14.

There was no Chairman or Vice Chairman report.

Under the Secretary's report, the 2018 election calendar was sent to all the non-school polling locations.

Under Old Business, Mr. Sasnett submitted a memo to the Electoral Board dated February 6, 2018, requesting the Board to consider adjusting the office hours to 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday (attached and made a part of this record). Due to a decrease in telephone and in-person traffic after 4:30 p.m., the office would no longer be open on Thursdays until 7:00 p.m. Any day on which a statutory deadline falls, and in-person transactions are allowed until 5:00 p.m., the Office will remain open until 5:00 p.m. If approved, this proposal would not go into effect until after the 2018 June primary. Ms. Hanley clarified that if the in-person satellite location is open in the Government Center, the Office will remain open until 7:00 p.m. on Thursday. Mr. Hunt expressed concern that not having one weekday where the Office stays open later than 4:30 puts a hardship on those who would have to take time off from work to arrive in time to transact business with the Office. Ms. Hanley pointed out that there is no solid data to show how many people visit the Office after 4:30 p.m. Mr. Stark inquired if a cost analysis for this proposal had been done. FCDC suggested considering the feasibility of a 1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. shift that would allow even more time for those with longer commutes. Ms. Hanley moved to table the proposal to consider other options, capture data on foot and telephone traffic after 4:30 p.m., and develop a cost analysis. The motion passed by a vote of 3:0.

Under New Business, Ms. Hanley reported that the Office will present polling place changes to the Board of Supervisors on March 6, 2018, to authorize a public hearing on March 20, 2018. The package will contain only the request to move precinct #214 Vienna No. 2 back to the newly renovated Vienna Community Center. [The Town of Vienna passed an ordinance on January 29, 2018, to relocate the polling location for the Town of Vienna election from Vienna Presbyterian Church to the Vienna Community Center (attached and made a part of this record.)]

Ms. Hanley listed additional changes to be considered later in the year, including a new polling location for precinct #619 Belvoir, currently located at Newington Department of Vehicle Services (DVS); a new polling location for precinct #844 Centerpointe due to the sale of the Centerpointe Church; and a new polling location for precinct #802 Cedar Lake, currently co-located with precinct #848 Fair Oaks, at the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) building on Alliance Drive.

Mr. Sasnett suggested looking into the retail space at the Fair Lakes Promenade vacated by HH Gregg as a possibility not only for a polling location, but for a flex storage/training area for the Office. He also mentioned the possibility of space in the ManTech building since Fairfax County leases a portion of the building for the Retirement Agency. Mr. Sasnett offered to engage with the Facilities Management Department (FMD) to discuss these options. Ms. Hanley expressed concern about considering non-County owned or rented retail space unless it is free. Mr. Hunt commented that the Fairfax County Firehouse No. 40 on Legato Road might have space to accommodate a polling location.

Under Absentee Satellite Locations and Hours, Ms. Kinsman reported that Tysons Pimmit Regional Library might be willing to serve as a satellite location, but only on Saturdays. Because “Saturdays only” worked well the first time Lorton Library was used, Ms. Kinsman recommended moving forward to try a satellite at Tysons Pimmit on Saturdays. This decision is pending approval by the Deputy Director of Library Services. A cost analysis has not yet been completed.

Ms. Hanley moved that for the June Primary, the Board offer 10 satellite locations (Saturdays only), and 10 locations for the November election. If approved, this number includes the Tysons Pimmit Regional Library. During discussion, Ms. Hanley pointed out that the trend in Fairfax County of in-person absentee voting continues to increase. This tendency is lessening the strain on the polling locations on Election Day. Mr. Hunt pointed out that “purpose of absentee voting is not to get people to vote early. The purpose of absentee voting is to allow people who are not going to be able to make it to the polls on Election Day to have a mechanism to vote.” He said that having fewer people voting on Election Day is not the purpose of absentee voting unless the legislature changes it from “absentee” to “early voting.” Mr. Sasnett added that the growth in the Tysons area will more than support an additional satellite location. Mr. Scott commented that the satellite locations are now functioning at maximum, and in some cases, beyond maximum capacity. The motion passed by a vote of 3-0.

Ms. Hanley moved that prior to each election that deploys satellite locations for absentee in-person voting, the Electoral Board expand the number of assistant registrars to include the number of satellite voting locations to serve for a specific term commencing with the opening of the satellite and ending with the close of Election Day. An election officer working at each of the satellite locations shall be designated an assistant registrar for the period. During discussion, it was pointed out that these assistant registrars would not be paid outside of the existing scale for satellite election officers. These assistant registrars would have no additional responsibilities or duties within the Office. The motion passed by a vote of 3:0.

Under Public Comments, Ms. Martin, LWV, remarked that she hoped that during the General Assembly session, there is a coordination of information between legislators and registrars with respect to the various election-related proposals submitted as legislation. This would ensure that necessary and crucial changes receive priority.

Mr. Farrell referred back to the 2016 Town of Herndon election held for the first time in November instead of May. At the North County satellite, a number of voters eligible for the Town of Herndon election were not given the ballot that included the Town of Herndon municipal offices. Mr. Farrell suggested the reason for this was the *application* (emphasis added) for the absentee ballot did not include space to mark that the voter should receive the ballot that included the Town of Herndon. Mr. Sasnett explained that the application is a form that is approved by the SBE. He acknowledged that eligibility for the Town of Herndon election can be missed. Training satellite workers not to miss the town designation in VERIS will be re-emphasized. Ms. Hanley added that other towns in Virginia who have moved their municipal elections from May to November [Town of Culpepper, Town of Leesburg, Town of Blacksburg] should be consulted to determine how they ensure that their town voters receive the correct ballot. The Board agreed to place this issue on a future Board meeting agenda. Mr. Hunt asked Mr. Sasnett to explore options (VERIS correction, ES&S enhancement) that would solve this problem.

The annual Virginia Electoral Board Association (VEBA) meeting will be held at the Omni Homestead from Friday, March 2, through Sunday, March 4. The next Electoral Board meeting will be on Thursday, March 8, 2018, at 5:00 p.m., in Conference Room 315.

Mr. Hunt moved that the Board enter into a Closed Session to discuss specific personnel matters, as permitted by Va. Code § 2.2-3711(A)(1). Without objection, and by a vote of 3-0, the Board entered into Closed Session at 6:44 p.m.

At 7:55 p.m. the Board concluded the Closed Session. Chairman Hunt 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 Hanley then called the roll for the vote on the above statement:

Voting Yes:	Chairman Hunt
	Vice Chairman Stark
	Secretary Hanley

There being no further business, Mr. Stark made a motion to adjourn. The motion carried, and without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Attachments

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Stephen M. Hunt, Chairman

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Seth T. Stark, Vice Chairman

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Katherine K. Hanley, Secretary