

MINUTES
Fairfax County Electoral Board
June 17, 2020

The Fairfax County Electoral Board (Board) met on Wednesday, June 17, 2020, in Conference Room 315 at the Fairfax County Government Center located at 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. Chairman Stephen M. Hunt; Secretary Katherine K. Hanley; General Registrar Gary Scott; Deputy Registrar Viki Kinsman; Election Manager Eric L. Spicer; Election Officer Manager Ravi Udeshi; and Clerk to the Board Beth Dixon Methfessel were present. The following participants attended remotely by telephone: Vice Chairman Bettina M. Lawton; Jack Kiraly, Executive Director of FCDC; Kristin Cabral and Stephen Spitz, members of FCDC; Maggi Luca, Deb Wake, and Racheal Hamlet representing the League of Women Voters (LWV); Charlie Zenker representing Zainab for U.S. Congress; and Jean Thoensen, Fairfax County resident.

Mr. Hunt called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and introduced himself and Secretary Hanley. Mr. Hunt made the following motion:

In accordance with Section 2.2-3708.2(A)(2) of the Virginia Code and Section 5(a) of the Electoral Board's Policy to Permit Participation in Board Meetings by a Member from a Remote Location, Board Member Bettina Lawton has informed me she is unable to physically attend this meeting due to a temporary medical condition, and that she intends to attend the meeting remotely. I move that Board Member Bettina Lawton be permitted to remotely attend this meeting due to a temporary medical condition, and that the Board confirm she has satisfied the requirements of Virginia law and Section 5(a) of the Electoral Board's Policy.

Ms. Hanley seconded, and the motion passed by a vote of 2-0. Mr. Hunt stated that the minutes shall record that the motion passed, and that Ms. Lawton is unable to physically attend this meeting due to a temporary medical condition; that Ms. Lawton is permitted to attend the meeting remotely pursuant to Section 2.2-3708.2(A)(2) of the Virginia Code and Section 5(a) of this Electoral Board's Policy to Permit Participation in Board Meetings by a Member from a Remote Location; and that Ms. Lawton will be attending remotely from her residence.

Ms. Hanley asked if Ms. Lawton could hear both the participants in the room and on the phone. Ms. Lawton confirmed that she could hear both Mr. Hunt and Ms. Hanley, as well as the other participants on the phone and in the room. Ms. Hanley confirmed that the Board, as well as the other participants in the meeting, both in person and via telephone, can both hear and speak to Vice Chairman Lawton.

Ms. Hanley moved to approve the agenda, and by a vote of 3-0, the June 17, 2020, meeting agenda, was adopted.

Mr. Hunt called for a motion to appoint 149 election officers (EOs) (43 Democrats, 76 Independents, and 30 Republicans) for a term ending February 29, 2021. The motion passed by a vote of 3:0.

Mr. Hunt asked for approval of the Draft Minutes of the Electoral Board meeting held on May 20, 2020. By a vote of 3-0, the May 20, 2020, Minutes were adopted.

Mr. Scott informed the Board that the Government Center will be open for absentee voting on Saturday, June 20, 2020, from 9 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Building security will allow a maximum of twenty-five (25) persons in the building at any one time.

Over 47,000 absentee ballots have been mailed out for the Primary Elections. Approximately 9,000 denials were issued for voters requesting Democratic ballots in the 8th and the 10th Congressional Districts (CD) because there is no Democratic primary in those CDs. Additionally, a number of these denials resulted in a second absentee request for a ballot, entailing a second denial.

The new space loaned to the Office of Elections has been staged to distribute election material and personal protective equipment (PPE), observe how to set up a socially distanced voting room, and practice using the electronic pollbooks (PollPads). Mr. Scott commended Mr. Spicer and Mr. Udeshi for their efforts in election officer recruitment and training despite the enormous challenges generated by the Covid-19 health crisis. Mr. Scott applauded the efforts of Deputy Registrar Kinsman, Assistant Registrar Holly Markwalter, and Absentee Ballot Coordinator Lisa Hogle for processing thousands of absentee ballot applications despite the fact that the system is complicated by the option that allows voters to request absentee ballots for four elections. Mr. Scott also recognized Assistant Registrar Cheryl Jones and her team for mailing out such a large number of absentee ballots in a timely fashion.

The Department of Elections (ELECT) has reimbursed Fairfax County \$777,625 for the March 2020 Democratic Presidential Primary Election. Fairfax County's Human Resources Department will make available, at no cost, between 200-300 county employees to assist in processing voter registration and absentee ballot applications for the November 2020 election. This staff will be phased in beginning July 1, 2020.

Mr. Spicer reported that EOs available for assignment exceeded the target of 1800 by almost 200. Of this number, seventy-two (72) agreed to an Election Day assignment anywhere in the county, and twenty-one (21) are reserve chiefs or assistant chief EOs. An extra EO has also been allocated in the seven (7) relocated polling places. Mr. Spicer remarked that this successful outcome resulted from the tireless, 2-month effort by Mr. Udeshi and the EO assignment team. Ms. Hanley asked how many EOs indicated their availability, accepted an assignment and then declined it. Mr. Udeshi responded that over 500 have declined their assignments. In light of this high number of dropped assignments, Ms. Hanley recognized the exceptional effort it took to meet the target of 6 EOs in the 8th and 10th CD and 7 EOs in the 11th CD.

FCDC inquired as to the number of absentee ballots returned and the number still outstanding. Mr. Scott answered that 20,000 Democratic and 5,000 Republican absentee ballots have been sent back with 18,000 Democratic ballots and 4,000 Republican absentee ballots not yet returned.

Under the Secretary's Report, Ms. Hanley explained that at the Board meeting on May 20, 2020, five polling places were relocated. Since that time, two additional facilities informed the Office of Elections that they would be unavailable for voting on June 23, 2020:

- 240 Colvin – from the Capital Church to Colvin Run Elementary School (with 323 Shouse precinct)
- 908 Hidden Meadow – from Episcopal Church of the Epiphany to Oak Hill Elementary School (with 909 Oak Hill precinct)

The Electoral Board officially notified the Board of Supervisors of all seven (7) emergency relocations on June 1, 2020 (memorandum attached and made a part of this record).

On June 9, 2020, the Board of Supervisors authorized a public hearing on July 14, 2020, to establish fourteen (14) satellite voter office locations.

Ms. Hanley thanked the EO team for providing excellent on-line training courses for new EOs, including new chief and assistant chiefs. The chief and assistant chief briefings were also conducted on-line. Reviews indicated they were well-received, successful, and without this option, the target numbers for EOs could not have been reached.

Under the Vice Chairman's Report, Ms. Lawton echoed Ms. Hanley's praise of Mr. Spicer and Mr. Udeshi's outstanding work to keep the number of committed and reserve EOs at a high level. She pointed out that surrounding states have struggled with conducting their elections due to insufficient numbers of election officials fulfilling their assignments.

Under the Chairman's Report, Mr. Hunt added his recognition of Mr. Spicer and Mr. Udeshi's success in new EO recruitment despite earlier reports that the number of EOs appeared to be insufficient to staff Fairfax County's 243 precincts.

There was no New Business.

Under Public Comments, Mr. Scott reaffirmed to FCDC representatives that curbside voting will be available for the remaining days of absentee voting and also at all of the precincts on Election Day. FCDC asked what type of notice was sent to relocated voters informing them of their temporary polling place. Mr. Scott replied that the notice was a letter inside of an official election mail envelope. The letter contained all of the voter's information as well as identified the new polling place. A yellow buck slip was also included to explain why the polling place changed. Mr. Zenker asked if voters could request a replacement ballot if they did not receive their absentee ballot. Mr. Scott explained that voters can come to the Government Center before 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, June 20, 2020, to replace the same ballot they originally requested. Voters can also go to their polling place on Tuesday, June 23, 2020, and surrender the absentee ballot

and vote in their precinct. If voters do not bring the absentee ballot to the polling place, a provisional ballot will be issued.

There being no further business, Ms. Hanley moved to adjourn. The motion carried, and without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Attachments

Stephen M. Hunt, Chairman

Bettina M. Lawton, Vice Chairman

Katherine K. Hanley, Secretary