

MINUTES
Fairfax County Electoral Board
December 20, 2021

The Fairfax County Electoral Board (Board) met on Monday, December 20, 2021, in Conference Room 315 at the Fairfax County Government Center located at 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. Chairman Stephen M. Hunt; Vice Chairman Bettina M. Lawton; Secretary Katherine K. Hanley; General Registrar Scott O. Konopasek; and Clerk to the Electoral Board Beth Dixon Methfessel were present.

Human Resources (HR) Generalist Blanca Arciniega; Election Officer Manager Ravi Udeshi; Voting Systems Manager Tyrone Allen; Assistant Registrars Pat Ferguson and Helen Chaikovsky; Election Officer Assistant Coordinator Alina Selnick-Escobar; Office of Elections (Office) staff Abigale Peters; Steve Knotts, Chairman of the Fairfax County Republican Committee (FCRC); Andrea Bayer, Christine Brim, Johnna Sachse, and Jeffrey Shapiro, members of the Fairfax County Republican Committee (FCRC) Election Integrity Committee; and Monique Anthis-Hunt, Steve Barch, and Christopher Henzel, Fairfax County residents, also attended the meeting in person.

The following individuals participated using the Zoom videoconferencing platform: Assistant Registrar Cheryl Jones; Kathryn Martin, Jerald Taylor, Office of Elections (Office) staff; Andrea Bayer (FCRC Providence District); Stephen Spitz (Fairfax County Democratic Committee (FCDC) Election Law and Voter Protection), Maria Vorel (FCDC Precinct Operations), and Janice Yohai (FCDC Voter Registration and Education); Arina van Breda and Maggi Luca representing the League of Women Voters (LWV); and Angela Boyer, Sandra Bellinghoven, Jason Buntin, Barbara Palmer-Tengs, Sue Swiatek, and Jean Thoensen, Fairfax County residents.

Mr. Hunt called the meeting to order at 6:12 p.m. and introduced the Board. He asked those present in the room to introduce themselves.

Ms. Hanley moved approval of the agenda. By a vote of 3-0, and with no objection, the December 20, 2021, meeting agenda was adopted.

Mr. Hunt asked for approval of the Draft Minutes of the Board meetings held on October 21, 2021, and November 3, 2021. Ms. Hanley moved approval, and by a vote of 3-0, the Minutes of the Board meetings held on October 21, 2021, and November 3, 2021, were adopted.

Mr. Hunt asked for a motion to appoint 57 election officers (21 Democrats, 14 Independents, and 22 Republicans) for a term ending on February 28, 2023. Ms. Hanley moved approval, and by a vote of 3-0, the Board appointed 57 election officers (21 Democrats, 14 Independents, and 22 Republicans) for a term ending on February 28, 2023.

Under the General Registrar's report dated December 16, 2021, (attached and made a

part of this record), Mr. Konopasek updated the voter registration numbers as of December 16, 2021:

Active Voters:	740,094
Inactive Voters:	38,860
Total Voters:	778,954
Permanent Absentee Voters:	50,195*

*The number of Permanent Absentee Voters is a new statistic that will be included in the General Registrar's report. This figure reflects the number of people who have requested and will be mailed a ballot for every election. This application supersedes the annual ballot request.

On December 8, 2021, the Office was advised of the new Department of Justice language mandates based upon the 2020 census data. There were no changes for Fairfax County; language assistance and voting materials will continue to be required in Spanish and Vietnamese. Korean assistance is provided at the Board's direction. Neighboring jurisdictions Prince William County, Manassas, and Manassas Park must now offer language assistance in Spanish. In response to a request for assistance, Fairfax County will help these localities with their implementation of Section 203 requirements.

On December 7, 2021, the Board of Supervisors adopted an ordinance revising supervisorial boundaries based upon the 2020 census data. The revisions maintained precinct integrity except for Woodburn precinct. Woodburn precinct, straddling I-495, will be split into two precincts. The adoption of new congressional, senate and house districts by the Supreme Court of Virginia is expected by the end of the year. It is anticipated that additional precinct lines will be adjusted based upon final approval of the redistricting maps by the Supreme Court of Virginia.

Bushra Ardan, acting Voter Registration Supervisor since June, was hired as a merit employee into that position in November. A new IT Manager and a new Fiscal Manager have been selected and will start in early January.

From August to Election Day, the Office received and responded to sixty-four Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. Since the election, the Office has answered an additional thirty-two requests. Each request contained multiple parts, and many had to be redacted so the actual work is disproportionate to the number of emails submitted. Forty-eight of the requests were made by a single person. While these requests distract from mission critical tasks during election season, the Office accepts that it is an important part of providing transparency and making information available.

On December 6, 2021, the team met and prepared a slide presentation summarizing the November 2021 election. Ravi Udeshi, Helen Chaikovsky, and Tyrone Allen presented the Post-Election Report (attached and made a part of this record). Copies of the slides will be made available after the presentation and will be posted on the Office's website at [2021-11 Post-election Report \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/elections/2021-11-Post-election-Report) and [\[2021-11 Post-election Statistics \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)\]](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/elections/2021-11-Post-election-Statistics).

Mr. Hunt asked how the ExpressVote (EV) machines were tested, and Mr. Konopasek replied that instructions were followed to create specific ballot types by the EV, and then these test ballots were scanned by a DS200.

Mr. Hunt asked if zero tapes were run at the voter satellite offices and if these tapes were available at the Canvass. Mr. Konopasek confirmed that the zero tapes were produced when the DS200s were powered on. The zero tapes were included as part of the Canvass. Mr. Hunt asked for verification on whether Va. Code [24.2-658] requires the printing of *tapes* (emphasis added) when it states, “if machines that print returns are used,” they shall be attached to the statement of results as well as the printed return sheet.

With the lawsuit no longer pending, Mr. Hunt asked Mr. Konopasek to explain how he accepted and processed absentee ballot (AB) applications lacking the last four digits of the social security number (SSN). Mr. Konopasek responded that this issue occurred on AB applications sent to voters by third-party groups. Certain information on these AB applications was already pre-filled. He explained that when a completed AB application contains the name, address, and a signature that matched the information in the state-wide voter registration system, the identity of the voter could be reasonably established without using the last four digits of the SSN. Mr. Hunt expressed concern that beyond the fact that names and addresses are public information, staff is not professionally trained to match signatures. He emphasized that the lack of the last four digits of the SSN on an AB application is material. He asserted that the SSN on the AB application is “one of our security gateways associated with the absentee ballot process” as it verifies that an AB application comes from a qualified voter. Mr. Konopasek pointed out that two sections of Va. Code conflict on what is considered “material”, and his decision was to give the benefit of the doubt to the voter if the voter’s identity could be established without the last four digits of the SSN.

Under the Secretary’s report, Ms. Hanley expressed deep appreciation to the Office, including seasonal staff and observers, for their commitment and dedication to the voters of Fairfax County in providing a “successful, efficient, and secure” election. She offered observations going forward to continue improving the electoral process, including enhanced voter outreach regarding the schedule for early voting; review of staffing needs for the voter satellite offices; consideration of a curbside voter satellite location; reinstating Zoom training sessions for chief election officers, including in-person open houses for hands-on training; proactive coordination with the Office of Public Affairs and other media to ensure the dissemination of timely and accurate election information, especially with upcoming redistricting changes; and better communication with school facilities and other polling location management regarding Election Day to ensure adequate parking and appropriately-sized voting rooms, as well as to avoid conflicts with other on-site activities. (The full text of Ms. Hanley’s comments is attached and made a part of this record.)

There was no Vice Chairman’s report.

Under the Chairman’s report, Mr. Hunt announced that this would be his last meeting serving on the Electoral Board. He graciously thanked staff and his fellow Board members, Bettina Lawton and Kate Hanley, remarking that “it has been an honor and privilege to serve on this Electoral Board for the last 8 years.” He stressed the need to maintain transparency to ensure that people do not lose faith in the electoral process. He emphasized the need to maintain

the many layers of security practices that support fair elections. Prioritizing secure election practices allows people to trust the outcome, avoiding a “hollow victory.” Faith in the electoral process also leads to the peaceful transfer of power. (The full text of Chairman’s Hunt’s address is attached and made a part of this record.)

Ms. Hanley thanked Mr. Hunt for his collegial style as Chairman of the Electoral Board. She acknowledged that his technical knowledge of voting systems and security benefitted the voters of Fairfax County in countless ways. She praised Mr. Hunt’s herculean effort to continue serving on the Board despite the physical challenges he faced after his accident. She presented Mr. Hunt a gavel in appreciation for his many years of dedicated service to Fairfax County. Ms. Lawton recognized Mr. Hunt’s instrumental role in understanding the complexities and the security aspects of the electoral process derived from all his areas of expertise. His practical approach kept elections in Fairfax County running smoothly.

Under New Business, Mr. Hunt recognized and welcomed Christopher Henzel who will assume a role on the Electoral Board on January 1, 2022.

Under Public Comments, FCRC asked if any additional information was available regarding the redistricting timeline and the creation of new precincts. Ms. Hanley responded that no definitive timeline has been established since the final plans have not yet been approved by the court.

Chairman of the FCRC Steve Knotts publicly commended Mr. Hunt for his service, applauding his dedication to “fair, free and transparent elections, run in accordance with the rule of law” and wished him success in his future endeavors. (FCRC letter dated December 20, 2021, attached and made a part of this record.)

There being no further business, Ms. Hanley moved to adjourn. The motion carried, and without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

Attachments

Stephen M. Hunt, Chairman

Bettina M. Lawton, Vice Chairman

Katherine K. Hanley, Secretary