

## **Berkeley County Board of Elections and Voter Registrations Meeting Minutes February 23, 2023**

### **Call to Order**

The meeting of the Berkeley County Board of Elections & Voter Registration was held in the Assembly Room of the Berkeley County Administration Building on February 23, 2023 at 10:30. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Don Saturday.

### **Board Members Present**

Don Saturday, Frances Taylor, Don Rose, Darel Trout, Leon Brown, Truman Metts and Pam Lamb. The record shows there is a quorum.

### **Previous Meeting Minutes**

The minutes from the meetings held on Sept. 8, 2022 and Dec. 1, 2022 were approved. The delay in the September minutes was due to the resignation of Ralph Rohrssen from the Board. He was serving as the secretary at that time.

### **Director's Report**

1. Reimbursements for the 2022 General Election have been received. The State Election Commission reimburses the county for the salaries of the poll workers, poll techs, early voting workers and mileage for the Board and the techs. There is not a reimbursement for ballot stock and because of municipal elections this cycle, Berkeley County had to purchase a special sized ballot. The cities of Hanahan and Goose Creek have paid the county for conducting their municipal elections and an overage has been paid by the county to St. Stephen for their election. More candidates filed and the fees collected were greater than the cost of the election so the town received a refund.
2. A Domicile Challenge Hearing was held concerning voters during the 2020 General Election on January 10, 2023 based on challenges brought by Tara Palubicki concerning SC Law 75-2-30. All concerned voters were notified by mail about the hearing. All voters appearing presented evidence that they are registered at the residence and have a proper valid ID or if they have moved following the 2020 election, they have filed a change of address with their current voter registration office. Procedures were reviewed by Ms. Brown and the county attorney, John O. Williams, for Ms Palubicki concerning the process of updating the Voter Records as required by law. Many functions and updates that she would like to see are done by the state. The county can only add new voters and update voter records for a change of address within the county. Should the voter request a change in their status, the county would forward that request to the state.
3. The county is working on the new FY Budget. Requests have been made for ADA compliant desks for the office, security screens and supply transport bags for use during

the elections. The transport bags would replace the large silver boxes that are extremely cumbersome.

4. Many of the new voter registration cards mailed last fall were returned as "undeliverable". Additional letters are being mailed to voters to try to collect information so that these voters will be properly coded on the voter rolls.
5. The SCAREConference was held mid-February in Myrtle Beach and was attended by the Director, 2 staff members and 2 board members. Highlights included a keynote address by election security expert, Thomas Hicks, addressing increased threats to those working in elections. There was also an internet security presentation and a very informative Legislative panel addressing the group. New officers for the organization were elected at the Conference and Rose Brown has been elected as the representative for the 1st Congressional District. She will serve as a liaison between the organization and the Election Offices in the 1st District.
6. The 2024 Democratic Presidential Preference Primary has been set for February 3, 2024, and will be the first in the Nation. The date for the Republican Primary has not been set but there is serious talk from the State GOP that it would follow about 2 weeks later. This will set the UCOVA date for military ballots on Dec. 19, 2023. Early voting will be determined by the respective parties.
7. The SC SEC will have a confirmation postcard mailer in the Spring of 2024 to all voters in the state that have not voted in the 2020 and 2022 elections. It will give the voter a chance to respond whether they are still registered at the correct address; if they want to remain on the records as a registered voter or be removed; or file a change of address if the voter has moved.
8. SC Ethics Reports are due to be filed by March 30, 2023.
9. Ms. Palubicki has submitted another list of voters from the 2020 election challenging their domicile when they voted. The Berkley attorney wants to meet with the Board about how to proceed.

#### **Old Business**

None

#### **New Business**

Following the Resolution filed last fall by the Berkeley County GOP to the Berkeley County Legislative Delegation and the SC State Election Commission and a Poll Watcher report filed in January following the 2022 General Election, Representative Sylleste Davis, Delegation Chair has requested a County Compliance Audit pursuant to SC Code 7-3-20 by the SEC in a letter to Howard Knapp, State SEC Director.

Representative Davis contacted Chairman Don Saturday about a State Audit. He welcomed the opportunity to have a review of procedures and processes so that we may identify any problems and improve our procedures going forward. We are working with 94 poll clerks and 348 poll managers that perform the election associated tasks every couple of years. There is training prior to every election but sometimes either training or staff fall short. The hope is that the audit will help identify areas for improvement. It is our mission to run fair and legal elections in

Berkeley County. Some of the items of particular concern from the report include the use of the seals that help assure ballot chain of custody. The machines are sealed when they leave the office to go to the polls and the Clerks have clear instructions on applying the color coded seals during the voting hours and for the return of equipment and ballots once the polls close. The closing tapes and the flash drives are transported along with additional admin paperwork in a sealed bag back to the election office. The SEC has produced a training power point that was available to all Clerks and Managers prior to the elections in addition to the handbook. There were no missing seals reported by the Board members as they visited the polling locations nor from the techs. Clerks will be identified for not using the seals properly and will receive additional training prior to future assignments. Further training suggestions will be made for preparation for future training sessions.

Additional clarification requested on a couple of items from the Poll Watcher report - it was reported that one of the Clerks took the Electronic Poll Books "home" to update them over the weekend prior to the election. When equipment is picked up on Friday or Saturday the Early Voting is still taking place. The SEC guidance for poll books that are picked up prior to Monday before the Tuesday elections is to have the Clerk "turn the machine on for about 1 hour" sometime after Saturday so that the MiFi connectivity can update the voter rolls prior to the election. On Election Day 2022 there were some problems in the morning because Verizon was down statewide.

More information on the duties of the Trustee Inmates that were working with the staff. The Trustees were moving boxes and equipment. The staff was 3 people short from the June Primary and HR had no one that could be sent over to help that could lift more than 50 pounds. This is done while climbing ladders to move the boxes and equipment. The Trustees are usually working in the warehouse but staff was out picking up equipment and they had to be supervised so they were helping move boxes and some ballot prep but they were not assisting with the audit. There is a lot of moving of heavy boxes because of the limited space in the new building. There is about ½ the storage space in this building as was available in the old building. Other new business includes there have been requests for an increase in poll worker pay that have been submitted to the General Assembly. We all need to encourage people to become poll workers. The application can be found at the Berkeley County website. There are SEC training classes in Columbia on April 20, 2023.

#### **Public Comments**

Submitted separately

#### **Next Meeting**

April 27, 2023 at 10:30

#### **Meeting Adjourned**