

## **Berkeley County Board of Elections & Voter Registration Minutes**

**December 1, 2022**

### **Call to Order**

The meeting of the Berkeley County Board of Elections & Voter Registration was held in the office of the Berkeley County Elections and Voter Registration on December 1, 2022. The meeting was called to order by Chairman Don Saturday.

### **Commissioners Present**

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

### **Previous Meeting Minutes**

Due to the resignation of Ralph Rohrssen from the Board, we do not have a written copy of the minutes from the September 8, 2022 meeting. We will table the approval until a printed copy can be generated from the digital copy that is available.

### **Director's Report**

1. Following the Domicile Hearing on Oct 13<sup>th</sup>, Ms. Tara Palubicki submitted another challenge to over 200 voters from the 2020 General Election. As previously, she states that she is challenging the domicile of these voters based on the canvassing that she is still performing in 2022. After consulting with the SEC and the County Attorney, it was decided to notify the voters by regular mail of the challenge and the hearing date and time in the same notice. We will send out a notice by December 9, 2022 of the hearing date, giving the voter at least 30 days' notice, once the availability of the Assembly Room and the County Attorney is confirmed.
2. There was a complaint filed with the SEC as a Title 3 violation by Helene Minard voting at the Fox Bank Precinct on Election Day. She cited problems with "the scanner, the voting machine and the WiFi ". She stated that the touch screen on the first page of the ballot with the Straight Party Ticket was not working. She said that her marked selection would not remain in the area that she selected and was moving to the Green Party. She continues to say that she requested assistance and that the staff could not get it to work either. She was moved to a different BMD and voted. She also stated that 2 seals on the front of the scanner were not in place. Neither the Clerk nor the Tech assigned to Fox Bank reported any information about this episode and they were contacted again and

still did not recall any equipment problems. The system for voting is the MiFi (not the WiFi) and there were statewide disruptions with connectivity issues in the morning that were reported by Verizon but those were beyond our control or the State. By about 10:00am, service was restored. Ms. Taylor had been informed of a connectivity issue when she visited the site but she was told it was the "way the WiFi was connected at the school" but that the problem had been resolved. There can be connectivity problems in some of the schools depending on the location of the MiFi device. There was no one that was unable to vote or turned away due to this issue. The response to the SEC was that no equipment issues were reported that day. They were aware of the connectivity issues statewide. They will respond to the voter.

3. From the certification, a question was asked about the accounting of the Provisional Ballots being returned from the Precincts. When the orange bags are turned from the precincts on election night, the envelopes containing the paper ballots are counted but the failsafe, emergency and provisional ballots are kept together until the investigation to determine the actual categories of the ballots occurs. The research has to be done to determine the true category of the ballot. Worksheet for accounting for all ballots is completed by the Clerk and submitted with the ballots. There is a chain of custody for the ballots both issued and returned. Clerks sign for the ballots and both the pick-up and when they are returned. There is an accounting procedure in place for all ballots but it was recommended that the person receiving the paper ballots also initial/sign the form submitted by the Clerk as well.
4. Elections for 2023: Municipal – Moncks Corner – Jamestown – Charleston\* – Summerville\* (\*areas within Berkeley County) – All will occur on "Municipal Election Day" which will be November 7, 2023. Early voting will be from October 23 – November 3, 2023, Monday through Friday, between the hours of 8:30am – 5:00pm. There will be only 1 early voting location for these elections. Filing for these elections will be from August 1 -15, 2023. We will accept the filings for only the Berkeley County areas of Summerville and Charleston. The remainder of those areas will file in their respective counties. All of these elections are non-partisan so there will be no Primaries.
5. Reimbursement from the State has been completed for the General Election. The SEC reimburses for the Poll Workers, mileage for the techs and the Board, legal advertisements and ballot stock. County Payroll Dept questioned the amount of overtime generated by the staff during the Election period and the Director explained the voting process to them including the Early Voting hours. The state has not added any additional funding for the additional hours involved with the new hours included now for Early Voting.
6. Towns were billed for the municipal elections. St. Stephen will get a refund because so many people filed for Mayor. Hanahan and Goose Creek have been invoiced.
7. Thousands of voter registration cards were returned during the mailing for the county last fall. They will need to be scanned and sent to the state in order to be coded properly on the voter roll. It is going to take the state a good while to complete all of

this. They will remain on the voter registration lists and can be reinstated if they appear with a proper Berkeley County address at the next election. If the register elsewhere the county would be notified and they would be removed at that time.

#### **Old Business**

1. We are not pleased with provisional/failsafe ballots that do not have enough information to determine the cause and are unable to count the vote. This is a Clerk failure and we would like to have these Clerks identified so that we can correct this problem. Perhaps the Clerks could sign the envelope as well as additional accountability. We will have a zero tolerance for this going forward.
2. Staff has to be reminded of what candidates and their representatives can and cannot do at the Precincts. Page 10 of the handbook needs to be read, reread and referenced.
3. During the audit after the Election, an observer, Heather Hickman, was taking pictures in the conference room while ballots were being brought in and unpacked for the audit. She became argumentative and Ms. Brown had to request assistance from the staff designated from the EOC (as County procedure). He had to ask her to leave. She sent her photo(s) to channel 5.
4. There was a complaint that trustees from the county jail were assisting in moving boxes and equipment. There was no extra staff available from HR. The Delegation would like us to refrain from using trustees. It was explained that the 4 trustees were behind on Child Support and had earned the right to join work parties.

#### **New Business**

1. Darel Trout has requested a printed Agenda for the Certification process. He feels that it would improve the order and eliminate some questions from those people attending the meeting. It would allow for public questions/comments at the end of the meeting. Everyone agreed that it would help add more order to the process.
2. Truman Metts brought up that precincts located at the Cane Bay Schools (High Middle and Elementary) are very close together causing some confusion for the voters. He would like us to consider signs or directions that would help guide voters to their correct location.
3. Pam Lamb brought up that we had some teen poll workers this cycle from Berkeley Middle College. They were very nice and seemed both eager and helpful. She also suggested that we try to recruit additional students to use with the guidelines form the state.

#### **Public Comments**

None

**Next Meeting**

The Domicile Hearing will be in January TBD and the next regular meeting will be February 23, 2023 at 10:30. A motion was made to go into Executive Session. No action was taken in Executive Session.

**Meeting Adjourned**

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn.