

BERKS COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

MEETING MINUTES

February 1, 2024 – 11:00 A.M.

Michael S. Rivera, Chair
Christian Y. Leinbach, Vice Chair – not present
Dante Santoni, Jr., Commissioner
Anne Norton, Director of Election Services
Christine M. Sadler, County Solicitor – not present
Cody L. Kauffman, First Assistant County Solicitor

CALL TO ORDER: 11:00 A.M.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

None.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The Board approved the minutes for the January 4, 2024, Election Board meeting as presented.

Agenda Items

1. Election Day Additional County Staff Workers

Ms. Norton noted that this request for County staff workers is similar to the 2023 Primary. The request includes 76 workers for the pre-canvassing and canvassing of mail-in and absentee ballots during three shifts at the SAM building. A new position, Pod Captain, was added this year to help manage the teams of County workers and answer procedural questions. The request also included 16 workers in the voter Call Center and 20 rovers.

On the motion of Commissioner Santoni, seconded by Commissioner Rivera, the Board approved the compensation and shifts for additional County staff working on Election Day, as presented.

2. Election Integrity Grant Post-Election Report

Ms. Norton provided an overview of Act 88 Funds spent for the 2023 Municipal Election. \$630,265 in expenses was spent and this included poll worker pay, ballot printing, truck rental for machine delivery, etc. This report must be sent to the Department of State 90 days after each Election.

Commissioner Rivera clarified that Act 88 funds are from the Department of State and not from the County.

On the motion of Commissioner Santoni, seconded by Commissioner Rivera, the Board approved the Election Integrity Grant Post-Election report for the 2023 Municipal Election.

3. Poll Worker Training and Poll Worker Pay

Ms. Norton reviewed the training schedule and proposed poll worker compensation rates for the General Primary. She highlighted that one change is the Interpreter training class pay rate increasing to \$55.

On the motion of Commissioner Santoni, seconded by Commissioner Rivera, the Board approved the poll worker training schedule and compensation rates for the April 23, 2024, General Primary.

4. PA Liquor Control Board Questionnaire

Ms. Norton noted that there are no referendum questions on the ballot related to PA Liquor Licenses.

On the motion of Commissioner Santoni, seconded by Commissioner Rivera, the Board approved the PA Liquor Control Board Questionnaire for the April 23, 2024, General Primary.

Election Director's Report

Anne Norton noted that the last batch of Permanent Mail-In Ballot applications is going out today or tomorrow. There are about 61,000 voters on the permanent mailing listing that receive an annual application to request mail-in ballots each year. In addition to this, the Election Services office is busy preparing Election day supplies, putting together poll worker training documentation, etc. for the upcoming General Primary.

Commissioner Santoni asked how the Elections Department is doing with recruiting poll workers. Ms. Norton said that we are always looking for poll workers, but we will have a better feel of what is still needed once the poll worker letters are mailed out.

General Comments from the Board regarding current election-related issues

None.

Public Comment

Jeffrey Wolfe, of Brecknock Township, voiced several concerns regarding voter privacy and voters needing assistance to vote at the polls. Mr. Wolfe suggested a form to fill out at the polls documenting the voters who were helped at the polls.

Don Starke, of Centre Township, asked for a copy of the Election Integrity Grant Program Post-Election Report showing how the Act 88 funds were spent.

Cody Kauffman, First Assistant County Solicitor said he believes that the reports may be made public by the State, or available by a standard request made through the appropriate law. Mr. Kauffman will verify and will get back to Mr. Starke.

Mr. Starke, also questioned why the County is opening another Ballot Drop Box. He said they are called mail-in ballots, so voters should use the mail to return them.

Adjournment: On the motion of Commissioner Rivera, seconded by Commissioner Santoni, the meeting was adjourned at 11:22 a.m.