

**BERKS COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
MEETING MINUTES
September 28, 2023 – 12:15 P.M.**

Lucine Sihelnik, Chair
Honorable James E. Gavin, Vice Chair
Honorable Jill Gehman Koestel
Anne Norton, Chief Clerk
Christine M. Sadler, County Solicitor - not present
Cody L. Kauffman, First Assistant County Solicitor

CALL TO ORDER: 12:15 P.M.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On the motion of Judge Koestel, seconded by Judge Gavin the Board approved the minutes for the August 24, 2023, meeting as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

None

Agenda Items

1. Logic and Accuracy (L&A) Testing

On the motion of Judge Gavin, seconded by Judge Koestel, the Board approved the Logic and Accuracy Testing schedule for the November 7, 2023, Municipal Election.

The L&A testing for the DS200 tabulators and Express Vote ballot-marking devices will begin Wednesday, October 4, at 9 a.m. at the South Campus, 400 E. Wyomissing Avenue, Mohnton. Testing of the central scanners and tabulators will be held Friday, Oct. 27, at 3 p.m. at the former SAM building, 19 N. 6th St., Reading. Testing of the electronic pollbooks will begin on Monday, October 30, at 9 a.m. at the South Campus.

2. PA Liquor Control Board Questionnaire

On the motion of Judge Koestel, seconded by Judge Gavin, the Board approved the PA Liquor Control Board Questionnaire for the November 7, 2023, Municipal Election.

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

3. Election Day Additional County Staff Workers

On the motion of Judge Koestel, seconded by Judge Gavin, the Board approved the Election Day Additional County Staff Workers for the November 7, 2023, Municipal Election (see attached document).

4. Proposed Ballot Drop Box Schedule

On the motion of Judge Gavin, seconded by Judge Koestel, the Board approved the Ballot Drop Box schedule for the November 7, 2023, Municipal Election (see below).

DROP BOX SCHEDULE

Services Center and Agricultural Center

NOVEMBER 7, 2023 ELECTION

DATE	HOURS
MONDAY - 10/23/23	8 AM - 5 PM
TUESDAY - 10/24/23	8 AM - 5 PM
WEDNESDAY - 10/25/23	8 AM - 5 PM
THURSDAY - 10/26/23	8 AM - 5 PM
FRIDAY - 10/27/23	8 AM - 5 PM
MONDAY - 10/30/23	8 AM - 5 PM
TUESDAY - 10/31/23	8 AM - 5 PM
WEDNESDAY - 11/1/23	8 AM - 5 PM
THURSDAY - 11/2/23	8 AM - 5 PM
FRIDAY - 11/3/23	8 AM - 5 PM
SATURDAY - 11/4/23	8 AM - 1 PM
SUNDAY - 11/5/23	12 PM - 4 PM
MONDAY - 11/6/23	8 AM - 8 PM
TUESDAY - 11/7/23	7 AM - 8 PM

Election Director's Report

Anne Norton noted that the office is prepared to send the first batch of nearly 18,000 mail-in/absentee ballots to the printer today (Sept. 28). She explained that the office had to delay the first mailing due to pending legal matters but is hopeful they will be sent out soon.

She said poll worker training classes have started up and will continue from now until early November. The Elections staff is busy confirming which poll workers are working and filling openings. She highlighted that there are seven open Judge of Election positions, specifically in the Muhlenberg Township precincts.

Ms. Norton said the office is continuing its outreach efforts and recently hosted students from Pine Forge Academy for a field trip where the staff walked the students through the entire election process. The staff has more outreach events scheduled for early October.

Ms. Norton noted that the staff is aware of the ongoing discussion amongst legislators to move the 2024 Primary date. She said we are informing poll workers of the potential need to be flexible since we do not yet have a firm date.

Ms. Norton mentioned that Governor Shapiro recently announced a change to voter registrations that come through PennDOT to make the updating process more automatic. The main change for residents is that they will now need to opt-out, instead of opting-in. Ms.

Norton stressed that this change does not affect any processes within the Election Services' office and that the same checks and balances remain in place.

She noted that Ibeth Ramirez from the Elections Services' staff has passed her notary test and the office will soon have two official notaries.

Commissioner Sihelnik reiterated the need for poll workers and stressed the robust and comprehensive trainings offered to poll workers. She applauded the staff for continuing its outreach efforts and said she was happy to see elections going out into the community to help educate the public on the election process. Finally, regarding the 2024 Primary date, Commissioner Sihelnik said she has been advocating to local House Representatives that, whatever decision is made, to do so in haste so that the Elections staff can prepare accordingly.

Public Comment

Jeffrey Wolfe, of Brecknock Township, submitted written recommendations to the Board and made comments on the checks and balances related to mail-in ballots and provisional ballots. He specifically asked that all mail-in ballots be checked thoroughly for completeness and that signatures be verified. He requested that ballots that undergo further review be sequestered and counted after polls close.

Adjournment: On the motion of Judge Gavin, seconded by Judge Koestel the meeting was adjourned at 12:33 p.m.