

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

Lucine Sihelnik, Chair
Honorable James E. Gavin, Vice Chair – not present
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: 12:16 P.M.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

On the motion of Judge Koestel, seconded by Commissioner Sihelnik, the Board approved the minutes for the October 5, 2023, meeting as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

None

Agenda Items

1. Approve Date Range for Mail-in and Absentee Ballots

On the motion of Judge Koestel, seconded by Commissioner Sihelnik, the Board approved Oct. 12, 2023 through Nov. 7, 2023 as the date range for correctly dated Mail-in and Absentee Ballots for the 2023 Municipal Election. Any ballot marked with a date outside of that range will not be counted.

Mr. Kauffman reminded the Board of the discussion they had before the Municipal Primary election about whether to count undated or incorrectly dated ballots. At that time, the Board decided to not count undated and incorrectly dated as per the Pennsylvania Supreme Court's ruling in Ball v. Chapman. Mr. Kauffman said there has been no substantive changes to the law since that discussion, but said the Board was tasked with defining what is considered an incorrectly dated ballot.

2. Polling Place Change for the 2023 Municipal Election

On the motion of Judge Koestel, seconded by Commissioner Sihelnik, the Board approved the following polling place change for Muhlenberg Township, Precinct 6, for the upcoming 2023 Municipal Election. Ms. Norton noted that this is a permanent change.

Muhlenberg Township – Precinct 6

From: Riverview Christian Fellowship
3301 Stoudts Ferry Bridge Rd.
Reading, PA 19605

To: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
3344 Reading Crest Ave.
Reading, PA 19605

Election Director's Report

Ms. Norton noted that the Logic and Accuracy (L&A) testing for the DS200 precinct tabulators and Express Vote ballot-marking devices is completed. Those machines are ready to be sent out to precincts, beginning on Monday, October 23.

She shared that she received confirmation prior to the meeting that the first batch of mail-in and absentee ballots will begin to be mailed out today (Oct. 12) and the full batch of nearly 18,000 ballots will be mailed no later than Oct. 13.

Ms. Norton reported that Election Services recently had an outreach event with the NAACP, that included a voting machine demonstration and education about what voters will see when they go to their polling place.

Commissioner Sihelnik noted that any community groups interested in an outreach event can call the Election Services office. She also called attention to the County's website and the many resources available under Election Services for the public to utilize as they prepare for Election Day. She also thanked the Election Services department for the continued trainings for poll workers.

Public Comment

Zelda Yoder, of Reading, said she serves as the secretary of the Berks County Democratic Committee and wished to submit a letter from the Committee regarding ballot proofing. Ms. Yoder requested that the County allow a representative from the major political parties to review the ballots before they are printed or distributed in any way to help catch any potential errors. Ms. Yoder then read her letter into the record. A copy of Ms. Yoder's letter is attached hereto as part of the meeting minutes and record.

Debbie Noel, of Robeson Township, said she was thrilled to hear the mail-in and absentee ballots would still begin to be mailed today. She also mentioned two people she knew that wished to be poll workers but were not able to attend training. She asked if other accommodations could be made to allow them to work the polls.

Adjournment: On the motion of Judge Koestel, seconded by Commissioner Sihelnik, the meeting was adjourned at 12:31 p.m.