

**HAMILTON COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
MEETING HELD
JANUARY 19, 2021 at 8:30AM**

The meeting of the Hamilton County Board of Elections was called to order at 8:30am by Chair Gwen McFarlin. Present were members Mr. Triantafilou, Mr. Gerhardt and Mr. Faux. Also present: Director Sherry Poland and Deputy Director Sally Krisel and David Stevenson with the Hamilton County Prosecutor's office. Due to Social Distancing and limited space in the Board Meeting Room, the meeting was live streamed for public viewing.

Ms. McFarlin noted that proper notice was duly provided as required by O.R.C. 121.22. Ms. McFarlin opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

I. APPROVE: BOARD MEETING MINUTES: DECEMBER 8, 2020

Mr. Triantafilou made a motion to approve the Board meeting minutes for December 8, 2020; Mr. Faux seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

II. HEARING: REGISTERED VOTER CHALLENGE

The hearing concerning the 2 Registered Voter Challenges filed November 30, 2020 by Mr. Joseph Janus, Jr. was continued from December 8, 2020. Present were Mr. Janus and challenged voters, Michael and Jenalee Hickey. Chuck Eckert, Registration Administrator, provided a summary of the challenge and an update. On December 11, 2020 and January 7, 2021, letters and copies of the challenges were sent to the voters at their new address with notification via letter sent to Mr. Janus. On December 17, 2020 both voters submitted change of address forms to the BOE and subpoenas were reissued to new address on January 7th; confirmation received on January 11th.

Mr. Janus was sworn and reaffirmed his challenge, acknowledging the change of address filed by the voters and his reasons for not withdrawing the challenges despite the change of address: the fact that the voters voted from their Deer Park address after they had relocated from this address.

Jenalee Hickey was sworn and provided testimony, stating they gained occupancy of their new residence on October 15th; it was confirmed they voted in person at the BOE on October 30th. She stated that she was confused regarding the change of address process.

Mr. Stevenson advised the Board that with respect to the matter of the challenge the options were to uphold or deny the challenge with reference to the address from which the voters were challenged.

A discussion followed in which the Board agreed that the item before them was the voter challenge and given the change of address has been filed, the challenge, although having merit, is moot.

Mr. Triantafilou made a motion to deny the challenge, with the idea that the other element of the challenge is not germane to the challenge question; Mr. Faux seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

III. REVIEW: NOVEMBER 2020 PRESIDENTIAL GENERAL ELECTION ANOMALY REPORT

The Board was advised of the anomaly summary and spreadsheet listing 120 voters. Staff attempted to reach out to each of the voters, contacting all but 47 voters. Staff intends to reach out to the remaining 47 via letter asking for a return contact. The summary includes an overview of reasons for the voters voting absentee and also provisionally. Ms. Poland provided a further overview of 5 specific voters:

#84: Voter made a specific attempt to vote twice to “see if they could”

#117: Voted twice- early at BOE, in person at polling place

#118: Voted at two different polling locations in Hamilton County on Election Day

#119: Family reached out to inform Board that the voter is a resident of New York

#120: Voter voted early in person at Butler County BOE and voted Provisionally on Election Day in Hamilton County

Staff will send letters to each of the 47 voters (the 5 above are included therein). The conclusion of this matter will be tabled to the Board meeting of February 9th.

IV. APPROVE: PRECINCT REALIGNMENTS

The Board was advised that the City of Blue Ash had redrawn ward lines, requiring the Board redraw precinct lines to coincide with the ward lines. The Board discussed what these redrawn lines may mean for precinct numbers and polling locations.

Alex Triantafilou made a motion to approve the precinct realignments; Mr. Faux seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

V. PERSONNEL ITEMS

The Board reviewed several personnel items:

1. Updated Organizational Chart:

- a. Chief Information Officer position created with Bill McJoynt taking this position and the position of Digital Communications Manager added.
- b. Title and Job description for PEO recruiter to PEO Training and Outreach Supervisor.

Mr. Triantafilou made a motion to approve the updated organizational chart; Mr. Faux seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Updated Job Descriptions: Made with reference to the above changes.

Mr. Triantafilou made a motion to adopt the updated job descriptions; Mr. Faux seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Full Time Staff appointments:

- a. Umerria Savani to Digital Communications Manager, IT Department.
- b. Homana Nebel to Administrative Associate, Administration Department.

Mr. Triantafilou made a motion to approve the Full Time Staff appointments; Mr. Faux seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Holiday Schedule: The Board was advised of the addition of Juneteenth to the Holiday Schedule pursuant to the Hamilton County Commissioners addition of this date to the County Holiday Schedule.

Mr. Triantafilou made a motion to revise the holiday schedule to include Juneteenth; Mr. Faux seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Salary Adjustments: The Board was advised of the Board of County Commissioners addition of a 3% increase; Staff recommends this increase be applied to full time staff salary increases across the Board and retroactive to the first pay period of the year.

Mr. Triantafilou made a motion to approve the Salary increase for Full Time Staff; Mr. Faux seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. RESOLUTION: REMOTE BALLOT MARKING DEVICE AND ACCESSIBLE SAMPLE BALLOTS

Ms. Poland advised that this is a renewal of a contract with Democracy Live which expired December, 2020. This resolution authorizing the Director and/or the Deputy Director to enter into the contract to renew the services provided by Democracy Live.

Mr. Triantafilou made a motion to adopt Resolution 21-001; Mr. Faux seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

1. Staff is working on an RFP for a new Voter Registration system. The current system was implemented in 2004. The goal is to have the RFP completed by the end of the month; proceed with the selection process over the spring with a recommendation to the Board by June and implementation of the new system over the summer months.
2. BOefile, a new on-line filing system for Campaign Finance has been implemented by the Ohio Secretary of State. This is an optional electronic filing system newly available to local campaigns. Notification has been sent to all candidates and treasurers via mail with further promotion planned through social media. Reports will be available on the website via BOefile but given it is optional, Staff will begin including scans of the 2021 reports filed via paper to the website for public access.
3. State Law requires the Board to reorganize between March 2nd and March 6th. The reorganizational meeting of the Board will be March 2nd.
4. It was reported that Petitions are being pulled, circulated and checked by interested parties; some filed already.
- 5.

Kenny Henning, Regional Liaison for the Ohio Secretary of State addressed the Board.

Mr. Faux addressed the Board with respect to a motion he made in August which was approved 3 to 1 to explore the cost and feasibility of Board of Elections Drop boxes. Mr. Faux acknowledged that the issue resulted in litigation at both the State and Federal level and a directive from Ohio Secretary of State to stop further investigation of the subject prior to the Election. Mr. Faux stated that the Federal litigation has been withdrawn and surmised that the Directive has expired as it pertained to the 2020 Election. He stated that at a State level ruling said BOE's do have the ability to consider additional drop boxes. Mr. Faux stated his opinion that there is no reason to pursue installing additional drop boxes at this time due to

decreased voter participation in 2021 but believes there is no reason to not consider pursuing continued research as to the cost and feasibility including security with respect to fire suppression capabilities.

Mr. Faux made a motion to reiterate his motion to investigate the cost and feasibility, including security aspects, of installing drop boxes, not in the immediate future, but so that the information is available to us if at some point it might be appropriate.

Ms. McFarlin indicated agreement that this research may be beneficial.

Mr. Triantafilou questioned this motion and how it differs from Mr. Faux's last motion.

Mr. Faux indicated there was no difference except his desire to continue to work on it; that the previous research was stopped due to the Directive and that although cost estimates were received from manufacturers, none of the previous research included security measures and fire suppression capabilities or feasibility of locations. Mr. Faux added that Staff handled the early voting "chaos" well but noted the traffic problems, believing additional drop boxes may have alleviated some of those problems.

Ms. McFarlin noted the creation of our own additional drop boxes for use on the premises and the possible reluctance of voters to accept the legitimacy of those boxes. She agrees to the idea of research while we have the time to do so.

Mr. Triantafilou stated that this is an issue of public concern and politization. He believes this decision belongs with the Ohio Secretary of State and the Boards can prepare accordingly. He will neither second the motion nor support it. He stated that the issue has been brought to the attention of the public and to ask Staff to devote resources to something that may seemingly never occur and to open this issue again, especially with the success achieved with the efforts of the last election, is something he cannot support.

Mr. Faux restated his belief that the timing of researching this now removes the controversy and politics of the matter.

Ms. McFarlin concurred and seconded the motion. Ms. McFarlin -aye; Mr. Faux-aye; Mr. Triantafilou -nay; Mr. Gerhardt -nay. The matter resulted in a 2-2 tie. Members will make their submission to the Ohio Secretary of State within the 14-day time period.

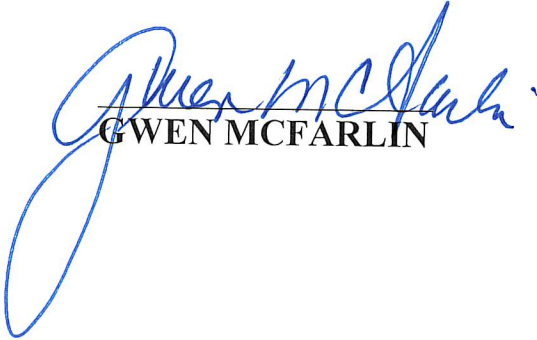
There being no further business to come before the Board, Mr. Triantafilou made a motion to adjourn; Mr. Faux seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

APPROVED:

DATE: February 9, 2021

CHAIR:

DIRECTOR:


GWEN MCFARLIN


SHERRY L. POLAND