

BOARD FOR REGISTRATION OF VOTERS

October 20, 2020

Remote and Virtual via Zoom

**Present:** Elizabeth Mickenberg, Lenore Broughton, Larry Granillo, Michelle Lefkowitz, James Rader, Helen Rock, Ariana Cano, Martha Gile, Grace Grundhauser

**Absent:** Anna Schneider, Kathleen Baldwin, Charles Cashatt

**Also Present:** Amy Bovee

**Minutes:** Sue Trainor/Amy Bovee

Mickenberg called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

**Agenda:** Rock made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

**Set Meeting Length:** Mickenberg set the meeting length to an hour.

**Minutes:** There were no minutes to review.

**Public Comment:** There was no public comment.

**Approval of Applications:** There were no applications to approve.

**Clerk's Report:** Bovee reported that early voting was very strong with approximately 10,500 absentee ballots having been received in the office. That was over half the typical turnout for a Presidential election. Things were moving smoothly. There were some great outreach events to disseminate information to new Americans on their voting opportunities.

Granillo asked for clarification on the total number of votes cast during a Presidential election. Bovee explained that the grand total of in-person and absentee ballots was typically 18,000 to 19,000. Rader asked what the rate of absentee voting was typically. Bovee stated during the last Presidential election 6,000 absentee ballots were sent and most of those were returned.

Rock asked if ballots were being opened. Bovee reported that the Clerk's Office staff could open the mailing envelope to record the name of the voter and to record a ballot as having been received. Ward clerks and poll workers could start processing ballots 30 days before an election in order to get as many ballots into the tabulator as possible. That process started last week. As of today, less than 100 had come back defective out of the 10,500 ballots received. Defective ballots were those that were unsigned or returned outside of the certification envelope.

In response to a question from Broughton about processing ballots through the tabulator prior to the election, Bovee explained that no results were recorded until the end of Election night. The data was stored in a memory card in the tabulator and the card was sealed so no one could find out how the count was going. Broughton then asked what would happen if a voter came to the polls and it was recorded they had voted absentee. Bovee stated she had not yet heard back from the State on this question, but she stated they would contact the Secretary of State if that occurred. She suspected they would suggest that the voter cast a provisional ballot.

Granillo asked how the procedures with absentee ballots changed from a normal year to this year. Bovee explained that in the past the absentee ballots would be stored at City Hall, delivered to the polls on Election Day, and the ward would open and process the ballots during the day. This year the Ward Clerks were able to open the ballot envelope and process the ballots through the tabulator in advance of Election Day. Chain of custody procedures were in place. After a ballot went into the tabulator, envelopes with the voter's signature were kept in the event there was a question about whether someone had voted. These envelopes would be boxed and stored for 22 months. Ballots that arrived closer to the election would be sent to the polls to process.

There was discussion about the work that Ward Clerks needed to do on Election Day. It appeared they needed more assistance. Mickenberg asked if there was a limit to the number of people that could work at the polls. Bovee stated there wasn't and she thought the clerks were increasing the number of volunteers to work that day. The August election had provided a good dry run and Bovee thought the November election would run smoothly.

Cano asked about who to contact if there were a problem at the polls with an individual. Bovee explained the Ward Clerks had been instructed to start with a pleasant conversation explaining the rules. They would then notify the Clerk's Office. They would like to avoid contacting the police, but if there were safety issues involved that might need to take place. City ordinance required a 30-foot radius around the polling place entrance and 15-feet to either side of the primary access route needed to remain clear so that voters could enter freely.

In response to a question from Grundhauser about COVID concerns, Bovee explained that people at the entrance would assist with keeping track of the numbers of individuals inside. Distance markers or traffic cones would be placed to remind people to stay 6 feet apart.

**Plan for November Election:** Mickenberg reported they had received a large number of volunteers. She asked the Board what they thought of her scheduling more than one person to assist them. Rock stated the BRV often ended up registering voters or assisting with other election tasks. Mickenberg asked if the wards had individuals designated to register new voters. Bovee stated they were reminded each time to have a designated individual. Bovee reminded the Board that some of the wards had smaller physical locations and it might be difficult to have extra people to help the BRV.

Mickenberg welcomed Grundhauser to the Board and provided her with details on her shift on Election Day. The Board was informed that Mickenberg, Baldwin and Rader would be initial contact people for Board members to contact if they had questions throughout Election Day. The Board discussed which wards Grundhauser could assist with throughout the day and which wards volunteers could work in.

Discussion then moved to COVID-specific items such as mask requirements and the use of golf pencils to complete paperwork.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.