

BOARD FOR REGISTRATION OF VOTERS

September 1, 2020

Remote and Virtual via Zoom

Present: Kathleen Baldwin, Lenore Broughton, Charles Cashatt, Larry Granillo, Michelle Lefkowitz, Elizabeth Mickenberg, James Rader, Helen Rock, Anna Schneider

Absent: Ariana Cano, Martha Gile, Weiwei Wang

Also Present: Lori Olberg

Minutes: Sue Trainor/Lori Olberg

Mickenberg called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Agenda: Rader made a motion, seconded by Broughton, to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

Set Meeting Length: The meeting length was set for 1 hour.

Minutes: Referring to the Approval of Applications item, Broughton asked how transfers were determined. Mickenberg stated notification came from other towns. Olberg reported that the Secretary of State's Office also notified the office. Broughton then asked how the decision was made to purge individuals from the checklist. Olberg explained that death records came to the office and Bovee purged those individuals. Olberg was unfamiliar with other methods used and would ask that Bovee provide that information to the Board. Granillo pointed out that the numbers of voters purged was higher in July because of the number of postcards returned as undeliverable. Broughton stated that resulted in challenge letters going out, rather than purging them.

Broughton then questioned the statement in the Clerk's Report that stated that a team of staff at CT would go through the postcards and make a list of which postcards would be returned. Rock and Baldwin suggested tabling the minutes. Schneider then explained that Bovee had explained the process at the last meeting. Rock suggested the term "CT" be defined. Rader made a motion, seconded by Rock, to table the minutes until the next meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Approval of Applications: Olberg reported that in August there were 653 new registrations, 565 transferred out of town, and 81 purged. Lefkowitz made a motion to accept the numbers as presented, seconded by Rader. The motion passed unanimously.

Clerk's Report: Rader noted his concern about the wording in the Clerk's Report on challenged voters and stated it was unclear. He made a motion to table the Clerk's Report. Broughton stated she was uncertain as to whether voters who were challenged were now part of the sealed voter checklist. She said that as of September 1st the checklist could not be changed. Mickenberg stated the checklist was constantly being updated with additions. Broughton said that the checklist had already gone to the printers and Mickenberg disagreed. Rock then read Bovee's statement that anyone registering after September 1st would receive a

ballot from the Clerk/Treasurer's Office. Lefkowitz further highlighted Bovee's report, explaining the process involved with challenged voters. The challenged voters would not receive a ballot automatically from the Secretary of State. They would, however, receive one once they returned a postcard with their information to the Clerk/Treasurer's Office. Rader again made a motion to table the Clerk's Report. Baldwin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Recap August Election and Plan for November Election: Mickenberg stated she would like to hear the experiences of those working at the polls in August. She wanted to know both the positives and the challenges so they could prepare for the November elections.

Rock explained that cones had been set up at Ward 6 to keep people socially distant. However, the cones were confusing to voters and they didn't know where to enter or where to go. Rock thought there should be someone available or a ballot box to accept absentee ballots that voters were dropping off. Lefkowitz stated that Ward 3 had an outside table at the polls to receive the absentee ballots and voters didn't have to enter the polling place. With the voter's permission, Ward 3 election workers reviewed the ballot envelopes to ensure they were signed. Rock stated she thought the election workers at Ward 6 did a stellar job. Mickenberg noted that Ward 6 had not had a specific ward clerk designated. Rock stated there was always someone in charge.

Schneider stated there were a lot of people bringing their absentee ballots to Ward 5. They became upset when they found they had to go into the polling place and wait in line to deliver their ballot. Mickenberg brought up the idea of having a drop box available so voters didn't have to use the mail. Olberg stated there was one now outside of City Hall and several other locations throughout the city were being considered. Mickenberg suggested having a box in each ward. Lefkowitz and Rock stated each drop box should remind people to sign the ballot certificate form.

Lefkowitz noted that she had forwarded a list from CEDO to Bovee that had both the ward and district addresses on one sheet of paper. Bovee was going to ask CEDO to recreate that list. The interactive map was helpful but having a paper copy would also be helpful for the election workers. Lefkowitz stated the information provided in the elections materials that highlighted wards and districts was from 2010. It just needed to be updated.

Granillo stated that Ward 4 voters only went inside to vote. Everything else was done outside and under tents. It was never very busy and the lines consisted of four or five people at a time. Absentee ballots were hand delivered to election workers at the outside table. Granillo was curious what it would be like in November when they wouldn't be able to be outside.

Broughton stated things went smoothly until close to the end of the day when there was a rush. Much of the work involved change of address issues and social security number verifications. Lefkowitz asked if it would be possible to stop verifying social security numbers. She noted that the same people who needed to be verified in August would need to be verified again in November. Mickenberg said they would need to talk about that later.

Schneider stated that Ward 5 was fairly busy and they did not have staff to deal with registration issues. She took over that role. In response to a question from Mickenberg, Rock and Lefkowitz stated they staffed their registration table as well. Mickenberg agreed that Board members typically took that on as needed.

Lefkowitz suggested markings should be placed on the floor to help people stay six feet apart. While voters stayed distant, Ward 3 did not have any markings. Schneider said that Ward 5 had tape on the floor.

Schneider stated it was helpful to have a “buddy” on the Board that you could call with registration questions. Mickenberg said that was good to know, as she assumed a number of Board members would again stay home in November and only be available by phone. She reported that Ward 2 had only had volunteers and Mickenberg had heard they had used the wrong forms.

Mickenberg then informed the Board that Weiwei Wang would be leaving the Board. She was hopeful that position could be filled soon. Olberg had a name on file of someone who had been interested previously. Olberg would reach out to determine that person’s interest in joining the Board once she had received Wang’s letter of resignation.

Mickenberg stated that a number of individuals who had volunteered in the past were not willing to work at the polls this November. She encouraged everyone to put the word out about the need for volunteers. Schneider asked if they had to be Burlington residents. Mickenberg stated they had to be residents to work at the polls, but they did not have to be residents to work with the Board of Registration members. She also clarified they could be high school students.

There was discussion as to whether there were enough Board members to staff all eight polling places. Lefkowitz asked if a City Councilor could cover if there were not enough Board members. Olberg stated anything was possible during this time. Mickenberg stated that Bovee had been trying to get Legal to review that question.

Rock reported that her son had requested that he receive community services hours instead of payment for working at the polls. She suggested that other high school students might be interested in that as well. Rock will discuss this option with BHS students. Olberg stated people had reached out to her expressing an interest in working at the polls. If any of these individuals weren’t appointed by the ward the Board could reach out to them. Lefkowitz suggested posting an announcement on Front Porch Forum. Mickenberg thought that should be discussed with Bovee at the next meeting.

Mickenberg stated that the League of Women Voters had been distributing information about the process of voting. Discussion ensued about the number of individuals who had not signed their ballot. Lefkowitz stated she would contact the League of Women Voters to request that they highlight the need to sign the ballot certificate. Rock suggested contacting Seven Days and Lefkowitz stated she would do that. Schneider suggested City Councilors could let their constituents know. Rock said this could also be addressed at NPA meetings.

Lefkowitz noted that many voters were unaware that the November ballot would be mailed to all voters. Some kind of announcement should take place. Rock said that voters should be told the date range for when the ballots should be coming and what should be done if a ballot was not received. Rader stated the Secretary

of State's Office should do more to get information to the public. Granillo noted that finding the information stating that November ballots would be automatically mailed out by the Secretary of State's Office was not easy to find on the State's website. Mickenberg suggested that the Governor could announce it at one of his press conferences.

In response to a question, Olberg stated that City Hall would be open on Monday mornings and Wednesday afternoons tentatively starting in mid-September.

Lefkowitz informed the Board that the Secretary of State's Office had incorrect information on their website about voter registration deadlines. She had contacted their office and requested the information be changed to reflect the fact that same day registration was allowed. She would review the website again and call them if the information hadn't been changed. Mickenberg asked Lefkowitz to ask if the Governor would provide information on the election during his press conference.

Lefkowitz stated her belief that if an unsigned ballot were received early enough, there should be a system in place that would allow individuals to retrieve their ballot and sign the ballot certificate. Rock agreed this had been brought up at a previous meeting. Lefkowitz said she would follow up with Bovee.

Mickenberg stated their next meeting would be Tuesday, October 6th. Rock made a motion to also hold a meeting on Tuesday, October 20th, seconded by Lefkowitz. The motion passed unanimously.

Mickenberg stated the four Board members not working at the polls would need to come up with a system of support for those election workers at the polls.

Cashatt was asked how his ward did during the last election. He said the ward clerk had just enough volunteers to take care of everything and there was not much traffic. He noted that people at the polls needed to stop looking at the maps because there was not enough border delineation to make it reliable.

Rock brought up the fact that a father had requested that his daughters be removed from the voter checklist. Bovee had informed her that only the voter could request to be removed. Olberg agreed and stated they could send a change of address form to the daughters if the father provided the new address.

Rader made a motion, seconded by Broughton, to adjourn the meeting at 7:13 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.