

BOARD FOR REGISTRATION OF VOTERS

MEET: Time 6:00 11/1/22

Where: Community Room at the Police Department

Present: Grace Grundhauser, Helen Rock, Larry Granillo, Michelle Lefkowitz, Kate Baldwin, Annie Schneider, Thea Knight, Elisabeth Mickenberg, Mike McGarghan, Alison Harte

Absent: Charles Cashatt, Karen Rowell

Also Present: Sarah Montgomery, Associate City Clerk

Meeting called to order by Chair Grace Grundhauser at 6:01pm

Agenda: Motion to approve made by Michelle Lefkowitz. Seconded by Kate Baldwin. Approved unanimously.

Meeting Length: The meeting length was set for one hour.

Introductions: New board member, Alison Harte, introduced herself. She applied for the position because she wanted to get more involved in the city and learned about this opportunity on board. She is proud of how Vermont makes it so accessible for residents to vote and experienced this herself when she moved here 11 years ago. She wants to support that work. Alison has a background in homelessness and affordable housing. Other board members introduced themselves.

Previous Meeting Minutes:

Discussion: Grace noted that she is not confident that her response stating that BRV members may never ask for ID is fully correct. She agrees that it was said, but stated that more information is still need to determine that fully – research on this topic is still in progress.

Motion to amend minutes to add note that the topic is still under discussion. Motion made by Michelle Lefkowitz and seconded by Thea Knight. Passed unanimously.

Motion made by Michelle Lefkowitz to amend the amendment to add “and will be discussed at a future meeting”. Seconded by Helen Rock. Passed Unanimously.

Lis Mickenberg made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Seconded by Annie Schneider. Passed unanimously.

Public Comments:

No public comment.

Approval of Applications: Sarah Montgomery reported:

October - New Registrations 410, Transferred out of Town 274, Purged 45

Michelle Lefkowitz made a motion to accept the numbers as presented, seconded by Lis Mickenberg. The motion passed unanimously.

Clerk's Report:

Sarah Montgomery reported on election activity. 6,603 General Election ballots have been returned voted to the clerk's office – out of the approximately 22,000 ballots that were automatically mailed to all active registered voters. 719 voted CSWD ballots have been returned – out of the approximately 1,200 that were mailed out by request. 130 voted ballots have been received back for the 12/6 East District Election – of the nearly 4,000 that have been mailed out to all active East District voters.

Helen Rock stated that she didn't fully understand why the CSWD question was not included on the regular ballot. Sarah Montgomery answered that Chittenden Solid Waste, as a county entity, does not have the legal authority to mail their ballots out to all voters, so the question could not be included on the General Election ballot.

Mike McGarghan asked: why aren't CSWD ballot posted at St. Mark's location so voters can learn about that ballot question? Sarah Montgomery answered that the ballots were posted in two public locations in each ward. Mike McGarghan feels there should be more publicity about the CSWD ballot and noted that people might not know the election is happening.

Helen Rock asked if we have received many defective ballots. Sarah Montgomery said she doesn't have the exact number, but probably around 40 total were received as defective and around 20 of those have been cured by the voter.

Mike McGarghan noted that he appreciated Sarah Montgomery looking into his inquiries and being responsive to questions.

Application Signing Schedule:

The Board set the following schedule for November and December: November 3 – Helen; November 10 – Michelle, November 17 – Grace, November 22 – Kate, December 1 - Larry, December 8 – Alison and Michelle, December 15 – Grace, December 22 – Lis, December 29 – Thea.

November Election Prep:

Grace circulated draft coverage.

W1: Kate (Karen train 7-11am)

W2: Larry (Allison train 11-4pm)

W3: Michelle (Allison train 4-7pm)

W4: Thea (7am – 1pm); Mike (noon – 7pm)

W5: Annie (7-9am, 4-7pm); Lis (8:30am – 4pm) (Karen train 11 – 4pm)

W6: Helen (Karen train 4pm – 7pm)

W7: Grace (Alison train 7-11am)

W8: Charles

Lis float as she is available.

Lis noted that she will want to pass the coordination of volunteers off at some point moving forward and would love other members to help figure out a transition process. Lis will send names/ times of helpers for the November election out to BRV members. Mike McGarghan asked if we should concentrate our volunteers to the wards with the higher turnouts if we don't have enough coverage for all the wards to have helpers. Michelle noted that sometimes the wards that have higher turnout may not necessarily have the most registration issues to deal with. Michelle suggested that maybe there could be a sign-up sheet for people to sign up on Election Day if they are interested in helping BRV members at the polling places during elections. Michelle also noted that she would love to see a diverse group of people doing this work. Sign up sheet would need to include their name, email, and phone number. Annie Schneider added that Winooski is recruiting for this and the volunteers have to do a bunch of paperwork – is this something that we would do? Helen Rock said the only paperwork required is a W9 if they want to get paid. Mike McGarghan asked: why can the BRV have helpers who are from out of Burlington when the election workers have to be Burlington residents? Larry Granillo said because they are not doing anything official – not signing any paperwork, etc. Michael McGarghan asked – doesn't there need to be political balance for ward workers?

Helen Rock asked what are the Covid protocols for if BRV members are feeling ill. Grace Grundhauser said members could call her. Mike McGarghan noted that maybe Sarah Montgomery should be notified too. Annie Schneider said this has come up in the past where she was sick on Election Day, and they fell back on what the city guidelines were at the time.

Question about how to register a voter who is homeless. Mike McGarghan said that in August they had a voter who was moved from the district but wanted to reregister in the district and they were able to register the voter easily by noting which ward and district they wanted to be registered in and listing a mailing address. Michelle Lefkowitz said part of the issue is that because we are mailing ballots to people and when ballots are bouncing back as undeliverable, the voter is getting challenged. Because they are challenged, they will be asked to say where they live on the affirmation of domicile. How should this situation be handled? BRV members will follow up on this question.

Mike McGarghan asked: what if a voter's mailing address is outside of Burlington and legal is within Burlington? Where are they registered? Sarah Montgomery answered – if the legal address is in Burlington they can be registered to vote in Burlington.

Michelle Lefkowitz made the proposal to extend meeting 15 minutes. Mike McGarghan seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

December Election Prep

Annie Schneider said she can do 7-9 am or 4-7pm on Dec. 6th. Grace Grundhauser asked: is anyone not available for this date? Michelle, Lis, Kate, Helen, Grace, Larry, Alison, and Annie all noted that they have some availability for the day.

Mike McGarghan noted that some people like to work a specific ward each election. Should we ask those folks first? Grace Grundhauser said we should discuss if people wanted permanent ward assignments at a future meeting. Larry Granillo noted that it might help to share the burden since there are only two wards for this election. Kate Baldwin noted that she would prefer not to work the whole 12 hours even though she typically covers ward 1.

Lis Mickenberg is proposing to move BRV meeting to the following Tuesday after the December Election. Kate Baldwin seconded that idea.

Discussion: Mike McGarghan asked why not skip since that has been standard practice with an election month.

Vote for whether to hold Dec 13th meeting. 8 members voted yes. 1 voted no. Motion to hold next meeting on December 13th passed,

Mike McGarghan asked how to get a new item on the agenda. Grace Grundhauser asked Lis Mickenberg how this has happened in the past. She suggested that someone ask Grace Grundhauser to add it to an agenda in advance of the meeting. Helen Rock suggested that the board determine future agenda items at meetings. This has happened in the past – where meetings have been dedicated to a specific topic rather than the normal housekeeping items. Kate Baldwin also added that a separate committee could work on something if it was going to take a significant amount of time beyond regular meeting time. Grace Grundhauser noted some outstanding issues that need further attention from the board: homelessness, voter id requirements, recruiting volunteers.

Mike McGarghan also noted that he would like to know how many BRV meetings should be able to be skipped while still acting as a member. Lis said she has had the experience not being reappointed many years ago because Council thought she had missed too many meetings.

Mike McGarghan also wants to talk about voter registration drives and why this counts as in person registration – Grace Grundhauser noted that this could be added as part of the Voter ID discussion. Helen Rock noted that the SOS website gives guidelines on how to do voter registration drives.

New Business

No new business.

On a motion by Michelle Lefkowitz, seconded by Mike McGarghan, the meeting was adjourned at 7:18pm.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Sarah Montgomery, Associate City Clerk