

BOARD OF ELECTIONS FOR NEW CASTLE COUNTY
Carvel State Office Building
820 N. French Street
Wilmington, Delaware 19801

MINUTES OF BOARD MEETING OF MARCH 2, 2010

Members Present: Mr. Austin Mr. Brady
 Mr. Krzyzanowski Mr. Lanouette
 Mrs. Pase Mr. Steele
 Mr. Sterling Ms. Whittington

Staff Present: Mr. Albence, Director
 Mr. Sholl, Deputy Director [via phone]
 Mrs. Rodgers, Elections Office Manager
 Mrs. Manlove, State Election Commissioner

1. Mr. Steele called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. Mr. Austin moved and Mr. Sterling seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the December 10, 2009, meeting as presented. The motion passed unanimously.
3. Mr. Steele welcomed new Board member Mrs. Bette Ann Pase. Board members introduced themselves to Mrs. Pase.
4. Mr. Sterling moved and Mr. Krzyzanowski seconded a motion to recess and caucus regarding officer positions for the calendar year. Following the caucus, Mr. Steele called the meeting back to order.
5. Mr. Brady nominated Mr. Steele to serve as President. Mr. Austin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Austin nominated Mr. Sterling to serve as Secretary. Mrs. Whittington seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
6. Mr. Sholl provided an update on the Department's financial status. Expenditures are on track, and the Department continues to monitor energy costs. Mr. Sholl also reported that the Department continues to make efforts to reduce expenditures on energy.
7. Mr. Albence reported that the Voter Registration Unit is current on all work at this time, He also informed the Board of recent updates on the number of registered voters in New Castle County by month, as detailed below:
 - 383,777 as of March 1, 2010
 - 383,176 as of February 1, 2010
 - 380,877 as of November 1, 2008 (comparison purposes)

Mr. Sholl also reviewed a chart detailing voter registration transactions by type over time. Since the implementation of the e-signature program, the Department continues to note a significant increase in the volume of transactions processed.

8. Mr. Sholl provided an update on the ballot status of minor parties in the state, based on current registration totals and the provisions of recently enacted legislation changing the threshold for minority ballot status.
9. Mr. Albence reported on the results of the voter card reconciliation for the Appoquinimink School District Referendum held on December 8, 2009. A discrepancy of two (2) cards is likely attributed to an error in not the cards not being properly annotated as "Left Without Voting".
10. Mr. Sholl reported that the Department, in partnership with the State Election Commissioner, hosted visitors from the Brennan Center for Justice on December 14, 2009. The delegation participated in a demonstration of the e-signature system.
11. Mr. Albence informed the Board of the following upcoming elections:
 - March 26 & March 29-31: Youth in City Government
 - March 29: Wilmington Job Corps
 - April 5: Town of Newport (tentative)
 - April 5: Town of Odessa (tentative)
 - April 6: City of Delaware City (tentative)
 - April 13: City of Newark (tentative)
 - April 29: St. Ann School
 - April 30: Howard High School of Technology
 - May 1: Town of Townsend (tentative)
 - May 11: School Board Elections
12. Mr. Sholl reported that the Department's website activity remains at expected non-election season usage levels.
13. Mr. Sholl informed the board that implementation of the "plain language" initiative to ensure maximum readability and comprehension of material on the agency's site and in agency manuals is ongoing, and demonstrated a sample of a page updated using "plain language" parameters.
14. Mr. Albence reported that the Department will conduct an "in house" training for staff for the auto-districting function, which will be introduced on March 4, 2010.
15. Mr. Sholl reported that the Department has received data from the Census Bureau for final review before the 2010 Census formally begins. This process provides an opportunity for the Department to review and reconfirm the validity and accuracy of base data from the prior (2000) Census before the current Census is undertaken. The review will be completed by March 31.
16. Mr. Albence reported that the State's elections administrators will be meeting with representatives from ES&S to discuss a path forward regarding support of and service for absentee voting equipment in light of the company's recent purchase of Premier Election

Solutions. Mr. Albence noted that Mrs. Manlove would share additional information on this topic in her report.

17. Mr. Albence reported that individual thermostat controls for the heater units at the Warehouse have been installed. The cost for this project was covered by the building owners, and this enhancement will provide tools for the Department to save energy (and reduce cost) for heating the Warehouse.
18. Mr. Sholl provided the following updates regarding proposed Federal legislation:
 - The Omnibus Appropriations Bill has been approved, which will provide some share of federal funding to the state.
 - The Defense Authorization Bill was signed by President Obama. This will impose expanded timeframes for mailing ballots to UOCAVA voters. These revised deadlines will require changes to Delaware Code to comply with these mandates. Legislation to update the Code will be drafted.
 - Other bills under consideration in Congress would mandate “no excuse” absentee voting and to establish additional/different policies regarding voter registration. These bills are in various stages of consideration at this time.
19. Mr. Albence reported the following legislation passed by the General Assembly:
 - HB 244: Revised Delaware Code regarding school elections, including acceptable public notice of elections and related requirements. Since the enactment of this law, four (4) school referenda elections in Kent and Sussex County have been cancelled.
 - HB 245: Authorized a general “clean up” of Delaware Code Title 15, eliminating obsolete language and practices, and raising the minimum number of registered voters for minority parties to obtain ballot status. With the enactment of this legislation, the minimum is 612 voters (i.e., 1/10 of 1% of registered voters statewide as of December 31, 2009).
20. Mr. Albence updated the Board on the Department’s Facebook page was launched on December, 9, 2009. The page is functioning well, and interest in and visits to the page continue to climb.
21. Commissioner Manlove reported the following updates from the Office of the State Election Commissioner (SEC):
 - The vendor for the absentee system the state currently uses (Premier Election Systems), as mentioned previously, has been purchased by Election Systems & Software (ES&S). The Commissioner mentioned that there is no update regarding the U.S. Department of Justice investigation regarding potential anti-trust issues related to this purchase.
 - SoE Election Systems has demonstrated an online Election Officer training software program to augment the training currently offered. The Elections team will be considering how to integrate this program into our training regimen.
 - The Joint Finance Committee hearings for the Elections team will be held tomorrow.
 - The next phase of the eSig program will be implemented shortly. Some “roadblocks” regarding this effort have been recently resolved.

- A statewide study will continue to investigate possible streamlining and standardization of processes, including absentee processing, auto-districting, and felon screening.
 - A constitutional amendment addressing a number of issues (e.g., referral to a voting age of 21 years of age, eligibility of felons to vote) is being considered by the General Assembly.
 - The relocation of the SEC office was completed in early December.
22. Old Business: None
23. New Business:
- Mrs. Pase moved and Mr. Brady seconded a motion to change the polling places for the May 11, 2010, Appoquinimink School District Elections. The change will eliminate Redding Middle School as a polling place, and substitute Bunker Hill Elementary School in its place. This change was requested by Appoquinimink School District and the Department did not oppose the proposed change.
24. Board Removals & Birth Date Corrections:
- Mr. Brady moved and Mr. Austin seconded the motion to:
 - remove 51 names from the voter registration rolls due to a move out of state
 - remove 1 name from the voter registration rolls through the address verification process
 - Make 5 corrections to birth years noted in voter registration records.The motion passed unanimously.
25. Mr. Sterling moved the meeting be adjourned. Mr. Austin seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
James A. Sterling, III
Secretary

Next Meeting: Tuesday, April 6, 2010