

RICHLAND COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS REGULAR MEETING MINUTES 04-06-2021 through 05-04-2021

Chairman Bill Freytag called the meeting to order at the Longview Center, 1495 W. Longview Ave. in the upper-level classroom at 3:00 P.M. on Tuesday, April 6th, 2021. The Roll Call was as follows: Bill Freytag, present, Jonathon C. Elgin, present, Lydia Reid, present, and Megan Whatman, present. Also present at this meeting were Director Paulette Hankins and Deputy Director Jane Zimmermann. Members of the media present included Monroe Trombly from the Mansfield News Journal and Seth Byrd from WMFD-TV.

Chairman Freytag asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the 3-02-2021 Special Reorganizational Meeting and the 3-02-2021 Regular Meeting. Ms. Whatman made the motion to approve both sets of minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Reid and passed by voice vote 3-0 with Ms. Whatman, Ms. Reid, and Mr. Freytag all voting for the motion. Mr. Elgin did not vote since he was not a member of the board for the last meeting. Director Hankins next reviewed the bills for the month of March in the amount of \$2,299.34 from the General Fund, \$4976.47 from the Security Grant fund, and two pay periods totaling \$28,349.42. A motion to approve the bills as presented was made by Ms. Reid, seconded by Mr. Elgin and passed unanimously by voice vote 4-0.

There were no items of old business to come before the board.

The first order of business under New Business was the review of the Pre-Zero Public Test as performed by Democrat Debbie Obenour, Election Specialist V/IT Support Tech and Republican Election Specialist 1 Daniel O'Brien. Director Hankins explained the reports as follows: the first report was the zero report demonstrating that no totals were in the tabulating system computer. The next report showed the total test votes cast in Man 1-D precinct, which has 4 splits, with 3 applicable in this election. The next report showed the total test votes cast in the Cass precinct which has 3 splits with only 1 applicable for this election. The next report showed the total test votes cast in Ont 1-A precinct, which has no splits. The next report was a summary of all 3 precincts, and the final report was a zero report showing that the tabulation computer had been set back to all zeros so that no test votes would be in the system when we start tabulating the Election night Unofficial results. A motion to approve the results of the programming and tabulation of the Public Test was made by Ms. Whatman. The motion was seconded by Ms. Reid and passed unanimously by voice vote 4-0.

Chairman Freytag asked for a review of the ICX Voting Units Allocation Schedule. Director Hankins explained the process in determining the number of units assigned to each precinct. She stated that no precinct would receive less than 4 units, as was the tradition set by Mr. Mudra in his years on the board. A motion to approve the ICX Allocation Schedule was made by Ms. Whatman, seconded by Mr. Elgin, and passed unanimously by voice vote 4-0. Chairman Freytag next asked Director Hankins to review the Paper Ballot Allocation Schedule. Ms. Hankins informed the members that the Secretary of State's office did not prescribe the percentages of paper ballots for every precinct in an off-year election. She also stated that our Rovers were trained to notify the office if precincts were getting low on paper ballots during their rounds on Election Day, and that the office staff could promptly print additional ballots if needed. After a review, Ms. Whatman made a motion to approve the Paper Ballot Allocation Schedule. The motion was seconded by Ms. Reid and passed unanimously by a voice vote of 4-0.

Chairman Freytag stated that the next item of new business was the hiring of a new Director to replace Paulette Hankins upon her retirement effective April 14th, 2021. Member Jonathan C. Elgin made a motion to enter into executive session for the stated purpose of appointment/hiring/compensation of a public official as Director of the Richland County Board of Elections. The motion was seconded by Ms. Whatman, and the roll call vote at 3:18 p.m. was as follows; Mr. Freytag, yes, Mr. Elgin, yes, Ms. Reid, yes, and Ms. Whatman, yes for a 4-0 vote. The news media left the room. Directors Hankins and Zimmermann remained in the executive session. At 3:23 p.m., the board re-entered open session with the news media present, with the roll call vote as follows; Mr. Freytag, present, Mr. Elgin, present, Ms. Reid, present, Ms. Whatman, present for a 4-0 vote.

Mr. Elgin offered a motion to hire Matt Finfgeld as Director of the Richland County Board of Elections as of April 15th, 2021 at a starting rate of 95% of the Director's/Deputy Director's pay rate which equals \$34.09 for the 90 days probationary period ending July 15th, 2021, at which time the pay would be the full rate of \$35.89 hourly, with all vacation accrual days, three personal days, all earned sick time hours, and seniority transferring from the Treasurer's office as per standard county policy. The motion was seconded by Ms. Whatman. Discussion followed, with Mr. Elgin stating that Mr. Finfgeld, with over 20 years of experience in the elections office and his career as a public servant made him the best choice of the applicants. Mr. Freytag stated that Matt's reputation with the office workers as being well-received and respected, and felt that we were very fortunate to be able to hire him as Director. Deputy Director Zimmermann said that she agreed it was a good choice and she looked forward to working with Matt for the next 10 – 15 years. The motion passed with a unanimous voice vote of 4-0, with Mr. Freytag, voting yes, Mr. Elgin voting yes, Ms. Reid voting yes, and Ms. Whatman voting yes.

The next item of business was the review of the RFP for new electronic poll books. Director Hankins informed the board members that Deputy Director Zimmermann had compiled the RFP document with the guidance and direction of Mr. Keller from the Prosecutor's office, and thanked her for all her work on the project. Deputy Director Zimmermann reviewed the specifics of the Request for Proposal document, and noted that the bids would be opened at 5:00 p.m. at the board meeting on May 4th, 2021. She stated that notice had been sent to each vendor listed on the Secretary of State's certified vendor list, and that a link to the full proposal was available on our website.

The next item on the agenda was informational only, and included a list of the days and times for early voting which commenced on this date. Next on the agenda, it was the consensus of the board to reconvene on Election Day at 5:00 p.m. The Directors asked the board members to make sure that their contact info was up to date to ensure that they could be reached on Election Day in case of an emergency situation.

Under other business, Chairman Freytag informed the members that he had been appointed to the legislative committee of the Ohio Association of Elections Officials. He stated that they were in the process of reviewing an election law redraft bill. He stated that some of their concerns revolved around the cure period, the redistricting timeframe, the possibility of 2 Primaries next year, and the deadline for requesting absentees.

The final item of business under other, was the Director's turnout prediction. Director Hankins informed the board that the last 3 Primary Elections had turnout rates of between 7% and 11%, and had similar races and issues on the ballot. She stated that she was predicting approximately a 15% turnout for the May 4th, 2021 Primary/Special Election. Deputy Director Zimmermann said that she had enjoyed working with Director Hankins for the past couple of years. Chairman Freytag added that he had always respected Director Hankins for just wanting to do the right thing, and that when he was Deputy Director, they had only disagreed a handful of times in the 10 years they worked together. More discussion following thanking Director Hankins for her years of service.

With no further business to come before the board, Ms. Reid made a motion to recess the meeting until May 4th, 2021 at 5:00 p.m., seconded by Ms. Whatman, and passed by voice vote 4-0. Chairman Freytag adjourned the meeting at 3:42 P.M.

On May 4th, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. Chairman Freytag reconvened the meeting with the following members answering the roll call as follows; Mr. Freytag, present, Ms. Reid, present, Ms. Whatman, present, Mr. Elgin, present. Also present at the meeting was Director Matt Finfgeld, Deputy Director Jane Zimmermann, and guest Betty Preston. Director Finfgeld reviewed the financials for the month of April in the amount of \$9,695.29 from the general fund, \$5,575.89 from the voting equipment fund, \$7,418.39 from the security grant fund, \$901.14 from cares act, and two pay periods totaling \$59,996.19. A motion to approve the bills as presented was made by Mr. Elgin, seconded by Ms. Whatman and passed unanimously by voice vote 4-0.

Chairman Freytag stated the next item of new business was the RFP's for Electronic Pollbooks. Member Megan Whatman made a motion to enter into executive session for the purpose of opening and reviewing the proposals received under the RFP for electronic pollbooks pursuant to Ohio Revised Code 121.22. The motion was seconded by Ms. Reid, and the roll call vote was at 5:06 p.m. was as follows; Mr. Freytag, yes, Ms. Reid, yes, Ms. Whatman, yes, Mr. Elgin, yes. Directors Finfgeld and Zimmermann remained in the executive session. At 5:34 p.m. the board re-entered open session with a motion made by member Ms. Reid, and seconded by Ms. Whatman, for a 4-0 vote. Joining the meeting at this time were guests Mike Greene and Pam Wilging.

Mr. Elgin made a motion to authorize the directors to consult with the County Prosecutor regarding RFP's received from Tenex Software Solutions and Knowink, to draft and submit a list of questions to each vendor to clarify any questions regarding the proposals. The motion was seconded by Ms. Whatman, and passed unanimously by voice vote 4-0.

The next item on the agenda was the upcoming meeting dates for May and June. Director Finfgeld stated the next meeting will be Monday May 17th, 2021 at 3:00 p.m. to review Provisional ballots, the Official count will begin on Tuesday May 18th, 2021 at 8:30 a.m., and the board will reconvene on May 20th, 2021 at 3p.m. to certify the Official count. The members agreed that a June meeting would not be needed at this time, and the next scheduled meeting will be July 6th, 2021 at 3:00 p.m., unless there is a need to call a June meeting.

Next on the agenda was the SOS summer conference that is June 7th- 9th, attending will be Directors Finfgeld and Zimmermann, and board members Freytag, Elgin, and Whatman. Next was just informational that we did receive our statement for yearly dues in the amount of \$1,771.00 for the Ohio Association of Election Officials and we will be paying it in May.

The next item of business was the review of the Pre-Unofficial public test performed by Democrat Matt Finfgeld, Director and Republican Daniel O'Brien, Election Specialist 1. Director Finfgeld explained the reports as follows: the first report was the zero report demonstrating that no totals were in the tabulating system computer. The next report showed the total test votes cast in Man 1-D precinct, which has 4 splits, with 3 applicable in this election. The next report showed the total test votes cast in the Cass precinct which has 3 splits with only 1 applicable for this election. The next report showed the total test votes cast in Ont 1-A precinct, which has no splits. The next report was a summary of all 3 precincts, and the final report was a zero report showing that the tabulation computer had been set back to all zeros so that no test votes would be in the system when we start tabulating the Election night Unofficial results. A motion to approve the results of the programming and tabulation of the public test was made by Ms. Whatman. The motion was seconded by Ms. Reid and passed unanimously by a voice vote of 4-0.

Chairman Freytag asked the Directors if there was any remakes that needed to be reviewed, the Directors said there wasn't at this time. At 7:30 p.m. the absentee and early voting results were sent from the scanners to the tabulation system. Memory Sticks from the polls were then uploaded to the tabulation system as they were returned. Paper ballots from the polls were then added to the totals. There were no 17 year old ballots to review. The final Unofficial results were generated and reviewed by the board. A motion to approve and sign the required documentation was made by Ms. Reid. The motion was seconded by Ms. Whatman and passed unanimously by a voice vote of 4-0.

The next item of business was to conduct was the review of the Post-Unofficial Public test performed by Democrat Matt Finfgeld, Director and Republican Daniel O'Brien, Election Specialist 1. Director Finfgeld explained the reports as follows: the first report was the zero report demonstrating that no totals were in the tabulating system computer. The next report showed the total test votes cast in Man 1-D precinct, which has 4 splits, with 3 applicable in this election. The next report showed the total test votes cast in the Cass precinct which has 3 splits with only 1 applicable for this election. The next report showed the total test votes cast in Ont 1-A precinct, which has no splits. The next report was a summary of all 3 precincts, and the final report was a zero report showing that the tabulation computer had been set back to zeros so that no test votes would be in the system when we start tabulating the Official results. The motion to approve the results of the programming and tabulation of the Post-Unofficial Public Test was made by Mr. Elgin. The motion was seconded by Ms. Whatman and passed unanimously by voice vote 4-0.

Ms. Whatman made a motion to give the Directors authority to stay and notify overlapping counties of the results. The motioned was seconded by Ms. Reid and passed unanimously by voice vote 4-0.

With no further business to come before the board, Mr. Elgin made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Whatman and passed by voice vote 4-0. Chairman Freytag adjourned the meeting at 10:19 p.m.

Date approved _____

Bill Freytag, Chairman

Jonathon C. Elgin

Lydia J. Reid

Megan Whatman

Attest:

Matt Finfgeld

Jane Zimmermann