

Butler County Board of Elections Board Meeting Minutes March 18, 2020

The Butler County Board of Elections met on March 18, 2020, at 9:00 a.m. for an emergency meeting. Roll call was taken and present were Chairman Frank Cloud, Member Mariann Penska, Member Todd Hall, Member Chris Wunnenberg, Director Diane Noonan, Deputy Director Eric Corbin, Poll Worker Administrator/Executive Assistant Melissa Trotta, and Fox 19 Reporter Mike Woeste.

Director Noonan stated Secretary of State LaRose issued Directive 2020-06 on March 16, 2020, approximately at 9:00 p.m. suspending the March 17, 2020, Presidential Primary Election. Director Noonan explained the boards must continue to process absentee applications until May 26, 2020. Member Wunnenberg asked, does it include early voting. Director Noonan said no, in-person voting will be held on June 2, 2020. She said the board was required to stay open on March 17th until 7:30 p.m. to receive any absentee ballots being returned. Director Noonan gave the additional operating hours for the June 2, 2020, election set forth by the Secretary of State. Member Hall asked what the additional hours are for. Deputy Director Corbin explained the additional hours allows voters to cure a deficiency on an absentee ballot.

Member Hall asked Director Noonan how a can voter receive an absentee ballot. Director Noonan stated a voter may print an application from the Board of Elections website to mail in or call the office to request an application. Member Hall asked what the deadline to request an absentee ballot is. Director Noonan said applications must be received by May 26, 2020 in order to receive a ballot. Member Hall confirmed voters could vote by mail or vote in person on June 2, 2020. Member Wunnenberg asked if the deadlines are dependent on legislation. Deputy Director Corbin said yes. Chairman Cloud asked if there will be a determining factor to tell the difference between the ballots received on or before March 17, 2020, and after. Deputy Director Corbin said procedures have been set in place to be able to track the ballots.

Member Hall stated Butler County Precinct Election Officials (PEOs) have always done an outstanding job. Member Hall suggested keeping good communication and energize PEOs for the June 2, 2020, election.

Director Noonan stated due to the COVID-19 virus some PEOs decided not to work for their safety. Director Noonan said two additional training classes were held Saturday, March 1, 2020, and Sunday, March 15, 2020, to prepare for additional call-offs. Director Noonan stated one hundred twenty people were trained and placed to work. Chairman Cloud commended the staff for their dedication to continue to prepare for the election under the special circumstances.

Member Hall asked how many PEOs were scheduled to work on Election Day and how many voting units were sent to the polling locations. Deputy Director Corbin stated 1,000 PEOs were scheduled to work and over 1,230 voting units were sent to polling locations. Member Hall asked when the voting equipment will be returned to the Board of Elections. Deputy Director Corbin stated the equipment will be returned as originally scheduled, Wednesday, March 18, 2020.

Member Hall stated directions to voters need to be posted on the website explaining how to apply for an absentee ballot. Member Penska said to utilize social media as well.

Director Noonan stated County Administrator Judi Boyko met with Deputy Director Corbin and herself to discuss the public health emergency. Director Noonan explained County Treasurers, Auditors, and Records offices are closing to the public, but are allowing citizens to make appointments and utilize drop boxes. Member Wunnenberg stated the office cannot be closed to the public and we must be available to the voters.

Deputy Director Corbin reviewed the COVID-19 plan the County Commissioners have adopted. He said the office would not close but staffing could be minimized on a rotating

basis. Member Penska asked if any employees' have the capability to work from home. Director Noonan stated not at this time. She said Deputy Director Corbin and herself are working with County Information Service Director Eric Fletcher for a secure way to work from home but also meet the Secretary of State's cybersecurity guidelines.

Deputy Director Corbin stated Judi Boyko asked to keep track of all expenses that occur in extending the election due to the COVID-19 virus.

Director Noonan stated employees were told to stay home if they are sick. She said the part-time employees last day will be Thursday, March 19, 2020, to limit the number of staff members in the office. Member Wunnenberg suggested for employees to wear gloves and use hand sanitizer when handling incoming mail.

Member Hall moved to go into Executive Session to discuss personnel according to O.R.C. 121.22(G)(1) at 9:33 a.m.: seconded by Member Penska. Roll Call:

Chairman Cloud yea
Member Penska yea
Member Hall yea
Member Wunnenberg yea
All in favor; motion carried.

At 12:16 p.m. Chairman Cloud states the Board is back in session.

With no further business, Member Hall moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Member Penska. Roll Call:

Chairman Cloud yea
Member Penska yea
Member Hall yea
Member Wunnenberg yea
All in favor; motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:16 p.m.

Frank Cloud, Chairman

Diane Noonan, Director

Todd Hall, Member

Chris Wunnenberg III, Member

Mariann Penska, Member