

City of Richmond



CHERLYN STARLET STEVENS
SECRETARY

JAMES M. NACHMAN
CHAIR

JOYCE KING SMITH
VICE-CHAIR

Electoral Board

Meeting Minutes
July 12, 2021

"SIC ITUR AD ASTRA"

SUCH IS THE WAY OF THE STARS

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the City of Richmond Electoral Board was called to order by Chairman James Nachman. In attendance were Joyce Smith, Vice-Chair; C. Starlet Stevens, Secretary; Jerry Richardson, Acting General Director; Adriene Davis, Exec. Asst. to the Electoral Board; Mrs. Elizabeth Butler, Ms. Barbara Zedler, Ms. Virginia Anderson and Mr. Prabhat Jain all members of the Richmond Republican Elections Integrity Work Group.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Mrs. Butler, served in precinct 203, reported on her observation of a very detailed June 2021 canvass. Through a FOIA request, Mrs. Butler obtained a copy of the master spreadsheet and abstract for each race and reported that 7 of 10 races were reported to the Department of Elections incorrectly and noted that as described in the Code of Virginia [Section 24.2-671](#) that the responsibilities of the Board is to meet and ascertain the results of the election. On behalf of Republican Integrity Working Group, Mrs. Butler requests the Board re-open the canvass, determine the accurate results of the June Primary and then revise and re-submit the results to the Department of Elections.

Ms. Zedler, served in precinct 409, noted that the group obtained a copy of the Election Error Results of the June 2021 Primary, this report displayed discrepancies in the number of votes cast versus the number of ballots issued. The Work Group requests the Director conduct a full investigation to include a written report with his findings at the next Electoral Board meeting. Question: How can there be more votes for Governor than turnout in more than one third of the precincts across the City of Richmond?

Virginia Anderson, served in precinct 810, also obtained a copy of the Error Report as a result of a FOIA request. Ms. Anderson commented that the report showed a number of precincts issued incorrect ballots in the 71st House of Delegates district race. The work group thought this information to be very troubling, there were people that attended these precincts to cast votes in particular precincts that were disenfranchised because they were not given the opportunity to vote for their candidate. The work group request significant changes are made to the process of issuing correct ballots and election officers are properly trained on split precincts and its procedures.

Mr. Prabhat Jain, a member of the Work Group quoted guidance from the GR/EB Handbook, section 14.3.2.1 the operational requirements of canvassing which states that there should be a Democrat and Republican representative for each canvassing team.

Director Balmer commented to the concerns of the Republican Election Integrity Work Group and provided possible solutions to their concerns.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Secretary Stevens to accept the minutes of the meeting held April 28, 2021. Motion seconded by Vice-Chair, Smith. Motion passed.

CANVASS DISCUSSION

Upon review of the original results spreadsheets, Secretary Stevens moved to accept Mrs. Butler's corrected results after meeting with Director Balmer. Chairman Nachman requested the corrected results be reviewed by the Board before approval.

Secretary Stevens amended the original motion to include that the corrected results are presented to the Board after the review with Director Balmer. Motion seconded by Vice Chair Smith. Motion passed.

NEUTRAL OBSERVER POLICY

Discussion was tabled.

LOCAL CANDIDATES CERTIFIED FOR THE NOVEMBER ELECTION

Director Balmer reported the candidates certified to run in the November election, those persons are Michael Dickerson and Antoinette Irving for Sheriff, Shirley Harvey and Nichole Armstead for Treasurer.

CHANGES TO ELECTION OFFICER TRAINING

Several Chiefs and Asst. Chief Officers were selected to form a committee that will address some of the issues mentioned in the round table discussion held several weeks ago. This work group will assist in updating the forms used, packing materials and the creation of our training information.

RECRUITMENT OF ELECTION OFFICERS

Director Balmer believes that the most effective recruiters are the election officers. Director Balmer suggested an incentive recruitment program for election officers only; that will include an increase in pay.

ROUND TABLE WITH CHIEF ELECTION OFFICERS

On June 26 all Chief Election Officers were invited to the discussion, 20 were in attendance. The purpose of the round table was to address issues and concerns to prepare for the upcoming November Election.

Chairman Nachman asked if there was anything on the old Statement of Results (SOR) that should be on the new SOR, Secretary Stevens answered that the over and under votes were not included. Director Balmer will share a draft of the new Statement of Results during the next Board meeting as recommended by Chairman Nachman.

Most of the Chiefs liked the idea of attending canvass therefore, Director Balmer will re-implement in-person canvassing by appointments.

DISCUSS NEW ELECTION LAWS

On July 1 Senate Bill 1395 and House Bill 1819 became law. These bills require voting in foreign languages as needed. Director Balmer reported that according to census data, in the City of Richmond the Hispanic population is around 8%, the largest population of Hispanic voters reside on the Southside of Richmond mostly in the 8th and 9th Districts. Director Balmer started communications with City Council members about the need to provide voting materials in Spanish. Chairman Nachman recommended that Director Balmer contact the Department of Elections to find out what the legal obligation is and also research the cost to implement this law.

Another law that started July 1 is Ranked Choice Voting for the governing bodies only (City Council). Every race on the ballot will still be considered winner takes all, except City Council, which will be determined by Ranked Choice Voting. It is the process which the voter continue to rank the candidates by preference until the candidate has 50% of the votes. Ultimately the decision to move forward with this type of voting lies with Council.

Director Balmer reported on House Bill 1968 which allows Absentee Voting in-person to be offered on Sundays during the early voting period. Virginia has the longest early voting period in the country, 45 days. Secretary Stevens moved that Sunday voting be discussed in depth. No one seconded, all were in favor. Chairman Nachman moved to have Sunday voting because it will increase voter participation. No one seconded the motion.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Mrs. Butler commented on the irregularities of the pollbooks during the June 8 election. She requested a full investigation and a status report be available at the next Board meeting.

Secretary Stevens moved to investigate the pollpad discrepancies.

CLOSED SESSION – Voting Equipment Security Plan

Secretary Starlet Stevens read the motion to hold a closed meeting pursuant to [Section 2.2-3711\(A\)\(19\)](#) of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act to discuss plans related to security of voting equipment pursuant to [Section 24.2-625.1B](#)

The Certification of Closed Meeting was read by Secretary Stevens according to [Section 2.2-3712](#) of the Code of Virginia, all members of the Board signed “yes” to the certification unanimously.

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Chairman Nachman reminded that we need to add “Other Business” to the agenda.

Meeting adjourned.

James M. Nachman
Chairman to the Electoral Board

Joyce K. Smith
Vice Chairwoman to the Electoral Board

Cherlyn S. Stevens
Secretary to the Electoral Board