

RICHLAND COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS REGULAR MEETING MINUTES 12-19-2019 through 03-20-2020

Chairman Bill Freytag called the meeting to order at 3:00 P.M. on Thursday December 19th, 2019. The Roll Call was as follows: Bill Freytag, present, Joseph H. Mudra, present, Lydia Reid, present, and Karen Browning, present. Also present at this meeting were Director Paulette Hankins and Deputy Director Jane Zimmermann.

Chairman Freytag asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the 11-21-2019 Regular Reconvened Meeting. Mr. Mudra made the motion to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Browning and passed by voice vote 4-0. Director Hankins next reviewed the bills for the period from the last meeting until 12-18-2019. A motion to approve the total of \$9572.01 from the general fund, \$2847.64 bills paid from the Voting Equipment fund, and two payroll periods in the amount of \$35484.19 was made by Mr. Mudra, seconded by Mrs. Browning and passed by voice vote 4-0.

Under old business, there were no items to discuss.

Under new business, Director Hankins reviewed the petitions filed as of the 4:00 p.m. deadline on December 18th, 2019. She informed the members that Paul Walkers' petition for Democrat Central Committee was short 1 valid signature, and that Mr. Walker had submitted a notice to withdraw his candidacy and had filed as a write-in candidate from Wash- A Precinct for the same position. Ms. Hankins next informed the board members that Gerald Strouth had entered Precinct Man 4-A on his petition instead of his residency precinct of Man 4-E, and had obtained his signatures from Man 4-A. Mr. Strouth submitted a notice to withdraw his candidacy, but declined to circulate another petition or file as a write-in candidate. Mr. Mudra made a motion to invalidate the petitions of Mr. Walker and Mr. Strouth. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Browning and passed unanimously by voice vote 4-0. Director Hankins reviewed the Declarations of Intent to be a write-in candidate filed to date as Mr. Walker for Wash-A Democratic Central Committee, Cynthia Bias, Republican Central Committee from Man 1-E, and Sam Grady, Democratic Candidate for the 2nd House District State Representative. A motion to approve the write-ins was made by Mr. Mudra, seconded by Mrs. Browning and passed unanimously by voice vote 4-0. A motion to approve all the other petitions filed by the deadline was made by Mrs. Browning, seconded by Mrs. Reid and passed unanimously by voice vote 4-0. Deputy Director Zimmermann next reviewed the local issues and questions for the March 17th, 2020 Primary ballot. She stated that the Village of Bellville had filed a tax levy for current expenses, the 7-Eleven Store in precinct Man 1-F and the Hudson and Essex in Man 5-A had both filed Local Options, and Huron County sent us an overlap issue for South Central School District for an Income Tax and Bond Issue. Mrs. Browning made a motion to approve the issues as filed. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Reid and passed unanimously by voice vote 4-0.

After a review, Mr. Mudra made a motion to approve the ICX Allocation Schedule as submitted. Mrs. Browning seconded the motion which passed unanimously by voice vote 4-0. Director Hankins then explained the formula used to determine the Paper Ballot Allocation Schedule by precinct. Mr. Mudra made a motion to approve this Schedule as submitted. Mrs. Browning seconded the motion which passed unanimously by voice vote 4-0. The Directors next reviewed the March 2020 Primary Election Office Schedule, including the Poll Worker Training Schedule. Mrs. Reid made a motion to approve this training schedule. Mrs. Browning seconded the motion which passed unanimously by voice vote 4-0. The next item on the agenda was the review of the quote from Dominion for additional tabulation equipment. A motion to purchase 1 additional EMS Client Workstation and 3 EMS Adjudication Workstations in the total amount of \$8675.00, with no additional cost for installation, was made by Mr. Mudra, seconded by Mrs. Browning and passed unanimously by voice vote 4-0.

The Directors next discussed with the board the need to deliver and pick up the voting equipment prior to and after each election. It was the consensus of the board members not to combine any polling places prior to the 2020 Presidential Elections. Deputy Director Zimmermann suggested that after the 2020 census lines were redrawn would possibly be a better time to combine township polling places. The board members agreed that we should proceed with developing the plan to deliver the equipment. Director Hankins informed the board that she had been contacted by the Ontario Christian Fellowship Church polling location owner/secretary, and that they hadn't realized that the Primary would be in March. She stated that they had an Upwards Youth Basketball Tournament scheduled there for the entire week of the Election. She stated that it's possible we could move the polling place downstairs to the Fellowship Hall for that election, but she would need to get their Deacons' board approval. The Directors stated that since the board would not have a quorum to meet again in the next couple of months, that they were requesting permission, if needed, to move this polling place to a different location for the March Primary. A motion to allow this polling place move, if necessary, was made by Mr. Mudra, seconded by Mrs. Browning and passed unanimously by voice vote 4-0.

Under Other Business, Director Hankins stated that 5 candidates had been referred to the Ohio Elections Commission, as required, due to non-filing/late-filing of their campaign finance post-election reports. The candidates referred included Gerald Strouth, Alomar Davenport, Don Bryant, Phil Scott and Cheryl Meier. All the 5 candidates had filed their reports by Monday December 16th when the Elections Commission forms were sent. Director Hankins informed the board that she had talked to Andrew Keller of the Prosecutor's Office about the board's referral for possible double voting by Mr. Ray Ellison in the November 2019 General Election. She stated that Attorney Keller informed her that they would not be pursuing the issue with Mr. Ellison due to his age and possible health concerns, and the fact that it was not an overt attempt to vote twice, and the system worked in the fact that the Provisional wasn't counted.

The January and February meeting dates were discussed next. It was determined that a quorum wouldn't be possible due to several members being out of the state during those months. Joseph H. Mudra made a motion to recess the meeting until March 17th, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. Karen Browning seconded the motion which passed unanimously by voice vote 4-0.

With no further business to come before the board, Chairman Bill Freytag recessed the meeting at 3:39 p.m.

Due to not having the Election on March 17th, 2020 (Coronavirus – Election postponed through order of State), the reconvene date/time was revised to March 20th at 11:00 a.m. in the Lower Level Classroom at the Longview Center.

Chairman Bill Freytag called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. on March 20, 2020. Responding as present to the roll call were Bill Freytag, Joseph H. Mudra and Lydia Reid. Karen Browning was excused due to being out of the State.

The first order of business was the review of the Financial reports. Director Hankins reviewed the bills paid in January for a total of \$131,665.49 from the General Fund and \$8374.34 from the Voting Equipment Fund. For the month of February, the total from the General Fund was \$7911.61 and \$6207.24 from the Security Grant Fund. The payrolls for the past seven pay periods were reviewed next. The total was \$103,160.58. A motion to approve these bills/payrolls as submitted was made by Mr. Mudra, seconded by Mrs. Reid and passed by voice vote 3-0.

The first item on the agenda for Old Business was the certification of the additional write-in Declarations of Candidacy. The Director stated that Carline Curry for State Representative, Jeb Baker, for Democratic Central Committee in Man 3-A, Cindy Fowler for Democrat Central Committee in Troy B, Douglas Litt for Democratic Central Committee in Man 5-A, and Sarah Davis for Republican Central Committee in Man 3-A had filed by the deadline. Director Hankins also informed the board that Sarah Davis had then filed a letter of withdrawal of her write-in candidacy. A motion to certify/approve these filings was made by Mr. Mudra, seconded by Mrs. Reid and passed by voice vote 3-0. The Directors then updated the board members of the status of the cybersecurity mandates. They stated that all required revisions to our systems and office were in place by the deadline of January 31st, 2020.

The next item of business was the hiring of a new office staff member. Deputy Director Zimmermann informed the board that after interviewing several candidates for the position, Daniel O'Brien was asked to work as a seasonal in the office to help in the preparations for the March Election.

Mr. O'Brien started as a seasonal employee on February 8th. The Directors informed the board members that he had been an exceptional employee during the period from February through the present, and had performed some of the more difficult tasks with no hesitation, including processing Provisionals and assisting with the training of the poll workers. They also added that he had worked many hours weekly, including evenings and weekends as needed. It was the recommendation of both Directors, and with the support of the regular staff, that Mr. O'Brien be hired permanently, and that his probationary period start on February 8th. A motion to hire Daniel O'Brien for the position of Elections Specialist full time with benefits, at the starting rate of \$14.50 an hour effective immediately, and to start his 90 day probationary period as of February 8th, 2020 was made by Mr. Mudra. The motion to hire him as stated above was seconded by Mrs. Reid and passed by voice vote 3-0. Mr. O'Brien was brought into the meeting at this time and introduced to the board members. He was formally informed of his hiring and salary, and accepted the position.

The next item of Old business was the review and approval of the Chargebacks from the November 2019 Election. Deputy Director Zimmermann reviewed the Chargeback amounts in the total of \$89,396.00. A motion to approve the Chargebacks and the use of the board members' signature stamps was made by Mr. Mudra, seconded by Mrs. Reid and passed by voice vote 3-0. Next, the board reviewed the resignations and Republican Central Committee Appointment forms for various offices in the City of Mansfield and the City of Ontario. A motion to approve the resignation of David Falquette as Mansfield 1st Ward Councilman, and his appointment to the At Large seat previously held by Cliff Mears, the appointment of Laura Burns as the 1st Ward Councilwoman, the resignation of Mark Weidemyre, Ontario 3rd Ward Councilman, the appointment of Sherry Branham as Ontario 3rd Ward Councilwoman, the resignation of Larry Arnold, Ontario Councilman at Large, and the appointment of David Rehfeldt to the Ontario Councilman at Large position, was made by Mr. Mudra. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Reid and passed by voice vote 3-0.

Under New Business, the board members reviewed the Public Test conducted on February 4th of Precincts Man 1-F, Shelby 1-A and Jeff-A. The Public Test was conducted by Democrat Debbie Obenour, Election Specialist V/IT Support Tech and Republican Election Specialist III Carrie Hill. 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-F precinct. The next report showed the total test votes cast in the Shelby 1-A precinct. The next report showed the total test votes cast in Jeff-A precinct. 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 results. A motion to approve the results of the programming and tabulation of the Public Test was made by Mr. Mudra. Motion was seconded by Mrs. Reid and passed by voice vote 3-0. The board members waived the traditional process of initialing the Public Test due to health concerns in passing around additional paperwork.

The next item of New Business was the matter of trading the President's Day Holiday for another day of the staff's individual choice, since the workload of the office required the Staff to work that on that holiday. The Staff had been asked if they would like to trade the holiday for another day off, and all agreed to do so. A motion to approve this was made by Mr. Mudra, seconded by Mrs. Reid and passed by voice vote 3-0. Next, after discussion, Mr. Mudra made a motion to set the pay for the Truck Drivers and Equipment Delivery persons at \$13.00 an hour for these seasonal workers. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Reid and passed by voice vote 3-0. Director Hankins next reviewed the referrals to the Ohio Elections Commission for failure to file their Annual Campaign Finance Reports for Mr. Tom Beck and Mr. Doug Caldwell. No action was taken on these referrals since it is mandatory to report these instances of failure to file. The next item of business was to review any Independent Candidates' petitions. The Directors informed the board members that no Independent petitions had been filed.

The next item of New Business was the discussion of payment to the poll workers who had already picked up and some had set-up the equipment by the time the first notice of postponement of the Election was issued. After discussion, Mr. Mudra made a motion to issue partial compensation pay and the training compensation to the poll workers who planned on working on Election Day, March 17th, 2020 in the amount of \$75.00 (plus training) for VLM's and PJ's, and \$50 (plus training) for the other workers in each precinct. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Reid and passed by voice vote 3-0.

The Directors next discussed the office schedule due to the COVID-19 virus threat. After discussion, it was decided that for the health and safety of our Staff, office hours would continue as normal from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily, with limited staff presence on each day, and limited access to the public, commencing on Monday March 23, 2020. The board members decided to have the Democratic Director or the Republican Deputy Director present each day, along with one staff member from the opposite party of the Directors. It was also suggested to have a table outside our office door with absentee requests available and a lock box for the public to drop off paperwork. If a member of the public needs to access the office for any reason, the staff should maintain the 6' social distancing requirement. A notice should be posted on our website, our doors, and social media outlining these revisions to our schedule. A motion to approve the administrative leave with regular pay for all full time employees, with allowing modifications by the Directors if conditions or workload changes, until further notice, or until the State or local Health Department rules otherwise, was made by Mr. Mudra. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Reid and passed by voice vote 3-0.

The final item of business under the "Other" category was the discussion of mileage rate reimbursement. Director Hankins informed the board members that a notice from the Commissioners in early January stated that the rate would be 58 cents a mile. She stated that then another letter was issued later in the month informing departments that it was changed to 57.5 cents a mile. She stated that since our rate had been 58 cents a mile last year, and without another motion to the contrary, that 58 cents a mile had been in effect for these first few months of 2020. After a brief discussion, the board members declined to take any action on this issue, effectively leaving the 58 cents a mile in effect for this year.

Mr. Mudra made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mrs. Reid and approved by voice vote 3-0. With no further business to come before the committee, Chairman Freytag adjourned the meeting at 12:03 p.m.

Date approved _____

Bill Freytag

Joseph H. Mudra

Lydia J. Reid

Karen J. Browning

Attest:

Paulette Hankins

Jane Zimmermann