



MINUTES

WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

November 8, 2017

35 W. Washington Street

Hagerstown, MD 21740

240-313-2050

Present:

Board:

Tammy Downin, Vice President

Jim Schultheis, Secretary

Martin Lumm, Member

William Blazes, Member

Roger Schlossberg, Attorney

Staff:

Kaye Robucci, Election Director II

Barry Jackson, Election Deputy Director II

Teresa Morningstar, Election Supervisor II

Tammi Derr, Election Data Applications Specialist II

Sherrie Bonebrake, Election Administrative Assistant II

Dean Robucci, IT Election Systems

Guests:

Peter Perini, Chairman, Democratic Central Committee

Cathy Poropatic

Tillie McCoy

President Bruce Field was absent. Vice President Tammy Downin, acting in Bruce's absence, called the meeting to order at 5:34PM at the Washington County Board of Elections Office, 35 W. Washington Street, 1st Floor Conference Room, Hagerstown MD 21740. There was a quorum present.

Additions/Changes to the Agenda:

No changes to the agenda.

Old Business:

- A. Kaye Robucci reported that the Board of Elections held a "workshop" with the County Commissioners and County Administrator Rob Slocum on October 17, 2017 at the County Administration Building, 100 W. Washington Street, in the second floor conference room.
 - a. Scott Hobbs, Director of Engineering, presented five options for moving the Board of Elections. Only one was under the county's budget, five were over the budget.

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- b. The option that was under budget included moving the office to the second floor of 35 W. Washington Street, keeping the warehouse at 101 Tandy Drive, and moving early voting and election worker training to the outbuildings of the Senior Center.
 - c. Board members Jim Schultheis and Marty Lumm, staff members Kaye Robucci and Barry Jackson, and Dean Robucci with IT Election Services met with Scott Hobbs and John Van Riper with the county engineering department, Krista Hart, Administrative Assistant to Washington County Administrator Rob Slocum, and Amy Olack and Steve Reynolds with the Washington County Commission on Aging at the Senior Center to get a tour of the outbuildings.
- B. Proposed Office Site - Roger Schlossberg asked what the county thought was the advantage of moving the office to the second floor. Kaye Robucci said the second floor offers slightly more space than the first floor. Roger Schlossberg recalled that the Board of Elections used to be on the second floor and moved to the first floor to be more accessible to the public. Roger Schlossberg asked what the positives were to moving to the second floor. The entire staff agreed that there were no positives.
- a. Peter Perini said he was concerned that the election process in Washington County is not being taken as seriously by the County Commissioners as it should. He said he does not believe the Commissioners understand the amount of work the Board of Elections does, even in an off year. The desire of the Washington County Democratic Central Committee (WCDCC) is that the Board of Elections have an office that is easily accessible by voters, all voters, because this is not a partisan issue. Some of the solutions that have been proposed do not support the Board of Elections to the extent that they ought.
 - b. Cathy Poropatic said parking is a problem downtown. Moving to the second floor doesn't make any sense. How would residents of Washington County feel about security and integrity of the election process when equipment is moved from place to place?
 - c. Tillie McCoy doesn't like the idea of moving the office to the 2nd floor, and she hopes we do find a permanent place for early voting.
- C. Proposed Early Voting Center/Election Worker Training Site at the Senior Center – There are two outbuildings, a longer building (4,400 total square feet) and a smaller, square building (1,755 total square feet). Kaye Robucci reported that she just learned that the smaller building will not be renovated, as previously discussed, because there is not enough money in the budget.
- a. Roger Schlossberg toured the facility and was stunned that anyone would think that facility would work for senior citizens. The main parking lot is on a hill above the building. The only way to access the building is by a series of 24 stairs (4 sets of 6 with three landings in between). This would require 160 feet of switchback ramping to satisfy ADA requirements. On the other side of the building, there are 6 or 7 stairs. This would require 48 feet of switchback ramping to satisfy ADA requirements. There are five handicapped parking spaces on the same level as the building, which are not enough.
 - b. Roger Schlossberg said Washington County is consistently one of the two lowest performing counties in the state regarding early voting turnout.
 - c. Roger Schlossberg said training election workers at the Senior Center facility would be just as difficult, because a large portion of election workers are senior citizens.
 - d. Tammy Downin said, based on square footage of the largest polling places in the county, 4,400 square feet would not be enough space. Tammy originally thought

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this would be a win/win for the Board of Elections and the Senior Center, but she doesn't see how this would work.

- e. Roger Schlossberg said the goal has always been to find a facility where the Board of Elections can have all four components: office, warehouse, early voting, and training. If the proposed solution doesn't address this requirement, why move?
- f. Tammy Downin said the permanent solution is worse than the current temporary solution.
- g. Roger Schlossberg reported to the visitors the options the County Commissioners considered at the work session on October 17th. Reading from the list of options provided by the County Commissioners at the work session, Roger listed 101 Tandy Drive, Winter Street School, Valley Mall 2nd Floor, South End Shopping Center, and 480 N. Potomac Street. All of these options were above the existing budget.
- h. Mary Lumm said the idea is to get a win/win solution between Commissioners, Board of Elections, and Senior Center. He stated that the only way the Senior Center gets their out building renovated is if the Board of Elections' \$65,000, budgeted annually for rent, is used. If the Board of Elections decides to go with the Commissioners' recommendation, then we decide after the 2020 election that the Senior Center is not adequate for early voting and training, the \$65,000 per year budgeted for rent will no longer be available, and we will have no option to move anywhere else. So Marty's recommendation is to tell the County Commissioners that we want to stay put for the time being. Kaye Robucci asked if that \$65,000 could be removed from the Board of Elections' budget, and Roger Schlossberg said yes.
- i. Roger Schlossberg asked if the State Board of Elections would approve the Senior Center as an early voting center in its current state, and Kaye Robucci said no, because of the accessibility and parking issue.
- j. Peter Perini reiterated his concern about the seemingly lack of interest by the County Commissioners to the Board of Elections. The reason that the Board of Elections was able to get such a great price for the former Macy's site (\$3.00/square foot), was because the Pennsylvania Real Estate Investment Trust (PREIT) inherited the building. The Commissioners using the \$65,000 per year as a budgetary figure for a new facility for the Board of Elections is "ludicrous" and is hamstringing the process of finding an affordable facility. The lack of interest by the County Commissioners borders on voter suppression. Voters need consistency in their polling place. In 2018, Hager Hall will be the fourth early voting center in five election cycles. When the Board of Elections spoke at the Commissioners meeting in July, they were sitting in a multi-million dollar facility. The only reason the Commissioners are presenting options at all is because the Board of Elections forced their hand, making it a priority. Peter recommends that the Board of Elections not take their "foot off the gas pedal." What's going to happen when Washington County gets to 120,000 voters and we're required to go to three early voting centers? This is about encouraging people to exercise their constitutional right to vote, making it as easy as possible. It's about giving the hard working staff of the Board of Elections the tools they need to do their job, day in and day out, not just twice every two years. Peter believes the State Board of Elections shares his views.
- k. Sherrie Bonebrake wondered if the county has property that they own that they could build on. This is a longer term solution, but we've been discussing this for

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six years now, and if we had used the approach of purchasing property then and slowly built as funding allowed, we would have been in a new facility by now.

- l. Roger Schlossberg responded by saying that until Spring of 2017, the county and Board of Elections had made great strides in procuring a facility (Macy's), until everything went off the rails, through no fault of the Board of Elections. We need to come back and visit this after the 2018 election. We can't put any more effort into this now.
- m. Tammy said we need to consider our response to the Commissioners when we vote on this on November 14th.

Scheduling of Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Washington County Board of Elections will be held on November 14, 2017 at 2:00PM. The location is Washington County Board of Elections 35 W. Washington St. Room 101, Hagerstown, MD; as pursuant to the Bylaws of the Washington County Board of Elections, Article 3, Section 3.3(A) 8.

Distributed Information:

None


Adjournment:

There being no other business to come before the Board at this time, Marty Lumm made the motion to adjourn at 6:36PM, Bill Blazes seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

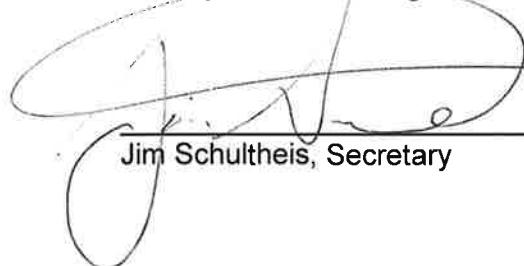
The Bylaws with advice of counsel shall follow the requirements of the Open Meetings Act as specified under Title 10, Subtitle 5 of the State Government Article.

Compiled by Barry Jackson
Election Deputy Director II

Respectfully Submitted,



Tammy Downin, Acting President 12/21/17
Date



Jim Schultheis, Secretary 12/29/17
Date