

PROCEEDINGS

**BOARD OF ELECTION SUPERVISORS
FOR WASHINGTON COUNTY
OCTOBER 23, 1996**

Present: Richard L. Coss, President
Daris Phillips, Democrat Member
Charles L. Mobley, Jr. Republican Member
Roger Schlossberg, Democratic Alternate
Dorothy Waters, Republican Alternate
Dorothy Kaetzel, Election Director II
Kaye E. Robucci, Election Deputy Director I
Sharon Mackereth, Election Registrar
Sherrie Bonebrake, Election Registrar

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 A.M. The Board was meeting to discuss the absentee regulations for the general election.

The Board will meet at the Clerk's office on November 6 at 9:00 a.m. to be sworn in. The process of opening, reviewing, and/or counting the absentee ballots will begin on Thursday, November 7 at 8:30 a.m. At that time Richard Coss will announce that breaks will be taken during the process.

The Board discussed the following procedures to be followed during the opening, reviewing, and/or counting the absentee ballots cast in the November 5, 1996 election.

DECISION: The Board decided to hold 10 absentee ballots to be included with all remaining timely overseas absentee ballots to be counted on Friday, November 15, 1996.

DECISION: The Board decided that any ballots referred to the Board for any reasons shall have a post-it note attached identifying the team and the reason it has been referred.

BOARD OF CANVASSERS - OPENING OF RETURN ENVELOPES

Dorothy will issue each team a batch of returned ballots. This batch will consist of an entire district or partial district. As each ballot is deemed timely, the return envelope shall be slit open, the ballot envelope shall be removed and verified that ballot envelope is signed & sealed.

STEP 1 - Verify Timeliness

Timely If:

- The date/time stamp is on or before Nov. 5, 1996.
- The date/time stamp is November 6 and the postmark is before Nov. 5.
- The date/time stamp is missing, check the post mark; (must be post marked before Nov. 5 to be timely).
- If the post mark is missing/illegible and the ballot is from outside the United States, open the return envelope and check the signature & date on the ballot envelope. (if it is dated before Nov. 5 it is timely).

DECISION: The Board decided that if any ballots are received from within the United States on Wednesday, November 6, and are timely but bear no postal mark; the ballot shall be referred to the Board.

If timeliness cannot be verified, refer to the Board.

STEP 2 - Slit return envelope and remove ballot envelope.

STEP 3 - Verify ballot envelope is signed & sealed. Must keep the return envelope & ballot envelope in the same sequence.

Acceptable signatures: If a third party signed the ballot envelope and completed the oath of person assisting the absentee voter, make note on ballot envelope that affidavit of assistance was received. Put affidavits in separate pile. Does not need to be referred to the Board.

But, if third party signed the ballot envelope and there is not a completed oath of person assisting the absentee voter, refer to Board.

Questionable signatures: There is only an X or some kind of mark for the signature & there is or is not a completed oath of person assisting the absentee voter, Refer to Board.

STEP 4 - Make sure no loose ballots or more than one ballot envelope are in any return envelope. If there are, refer to the Board.

Any ballots given to Dorothy will be ruled on by the Board **immediately.** Accepted Ballots are refiled in the appropriate order. A team cannot receive another batch until any questionable ballots have been decided and either accepted and returned to the team or rejected.

STEP 5 - Process continues until all return envelopes are opened.

BOARD OF CANVASSERS - OPENING OF BALLOT ENVELOPES

After all return envelopes are opened, the ballot envelopes are opened. Each team is given a batch of envelopes to open.

STEP 1 - Ballot envelopes are placed so that name/signature cannot be seen. Must be kept with signature down!

STEP 2 - Team slits each envelope.

STEP 3 - Team removes each ballot.

STEP 4 - Ballot envelopes are set aside.

STEP 5 - Ballots are inspected for compliance and tabulating acceptability.

Refer to Board if:

a. Any ballot signed, initialed, containing obscenities, or otherwise appears to have been marked in some manner to intentionally identify.

b. Any ballot that appears to have been "corrected" - tape, correction fluid, markovers, cross through ect.

c. If there are any tears, folds, food spills, stray marks, etc, that may render the ballot unacceptable for machine tabulation, or where there may be a question of voter intent.

d. Any ballot issued to an overseas citizen and has all offices except the Federal Offices crossed out. The Board must make sure that no votes were cast for the crossed out offices.

STEP 6 - Ballots referred to the Board are placed in a plain envelope with the team number or other information identifying what group the ballot belongs with is placed on the envelope. A post-it note is attached with the reason it was referred.

STEP 7 - The Board rules immediately on the acceptance or rejection of each referred ballot. Rejected ballots are filed at the Board table. Accepted ballots are either returned to the appropriate team, or sent to the Duplication team as appropriate. When ballots that had to be duplicated are completed, they are inserted into the appropriate group for counting.

STEP 8 - The process continues until all ballots have been removed from the ballot envelopes.

STEP 9 - the count and tabulation of the ballots shall follow their removal from the ballot envelope & not delayed.

This process shall be followed for both the regular and overseas absentee canvass.

REASONS FOR REJECTION OF AN ABSENTEE BALLOT

- A. No absentee ballot may be rejected except by unanimous vote of the entire Board.**
- B. The Board of Canvassers must reject an absentee ballot if:**
1. The ballot is not timely received.
 2. The oath on the ballot envelope is not signed.
 3. The ballot is intentionally marked - this includes names, initials, obscenities.
 4. There is more than one ballot, for the same election, in a ballot envelope - reject both.
 5. More than one ballot is received from the same person. The ballot with the earliest signed oath is counted; any subsequent ballot is rejected. If the dates are the same or cannot be determined, reject all ballots.
 6. The ballot was issued as an emergency absentee ballot, and it was not returned to the Board in a sealed envelope.
 7. Before the canvass of absentee votes, the Board determines an absentee voter died before election day.
- C. The Board of Canvassers, by unanimous vote, may reject an absentee ballot or a specific contest on a ballot in the following situations.**
1. Stray marks on the ballot which are determined **not** to be accidental and/or unintentional.
 2. Ballots not marked with the specified pencil or ink should be referred by the Board to be duplicated. However, the Board may consider the particular pencil or ink used too unusual enough to be considered as an attempt to intentionally identify the ballot.
 3. With respect to individual contests:
 - a. The Board shall not count any vote for a person who ceased to be a candidate.
 - b. If the ballot is damaged or otherwise marked, to the extent that the Board cannot determine the voter's intent, that contest(s) will be rejected.
 - c. If the ballot has erasures or has been altered or repaired, but the intent of the voter is clear, the Board shall process the ballot, or if necessary, have it duplicated and processed, whole or in part. Where voter intent is not clear, that contest(s) will be rejected.
 - d. When a ballot is not marked specifically in accordance with the instructions provided to the voter, the Board must attempt to determine the intent of the voter, and either mark or duplicate the ballot for tabulating.

Motion made by Jim and seconded by Daris to adjourn the meeting
at 11:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kaye Robucci

Kaye E. Robucci
Election Deputy Director I