

# **BOTETOURT COUNTY ELECTORAL BOARD MINUTES**

## **February 3, 2020**

The Botetourt County Electoral Board met on Monday, February 3, 2020, in the Second Floor Conference Room in the Botetourt County Court House in Fincastle, Virginia. Chairman John W. Rader, Vice Chairman William L. Heartwell, III, and Secretary Paul E. Fitzgerald were present. Director of Elections and General Registrar (DoE/GR) Traci Clark also was present. Visitors included Patrick Fitzgerald and Steve Vaughn, incoming EB member. The DoE/GR provided a detailed agenda with supporting information packet.

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m by Chairman Rader.

On motion by Vice Chairman Heartwell, the minutes from the meeting on December 9, 2019 were unanimously approved.

DoE/GR provided samples of the new Botetourt County logo issued by the Board of Supervisors on January 28, 2020. Members stated they felt the new logo was more of a tourism/economic development logo. On motion by Vice Chairman Heartwell, the Board unanimously chose to use the County seal as the official logo of the Department of Elections and Voter Registration.

An overview of the upcoming March 3, 2020 Democratic Party Presidential Primary was given by the DoE/GR. Important dates and deadlines were outlined. Logic & Accuracy testing was completed on January 10, 2020. Absentee voting began January 16, 2020 with 15 mailed ballots, 6 emailed ballots. Total absentee applications to date is 37 included 3 in-person voters. Although media reports of candidates withdrawing from the race, ELECT has not received official withdrawals from any candidates. A total of 57 officers have been assigned to the 11 precincts for the primary with a reduced number due to the low projected turnout. Notification has been received from ELECT regarding reimbursement to localities for the primary. Costs will be tracked and submitted as required.

DoE/GR reported on the new guidance from ELECT pertaining to precinct election officers. She stated only those officers whose names were submitted by a party could be considered as a representative of said party. All other officers who indicate their party would be considered as “self-designated”. She also reported to date she has never received lists from County parties for nominees to be election officers. This is a common theme throughout the Commonwealth. On motion by Vice Chairman Heartwell, the listing of precinct election officers presented were approved unanimously with an expiration of term to be February 28, 2021.

DoE/GR Clark reported a majority of her time has been focused on complying with the numerous emails from ELECT regarding the HB2178 standards. Two surveys were required to be completed - one by December 31, 2019 and the second by January 17, 2020. The County’s IT personnel have been extremely helpful and responsive in working on these surveys which were designed to assess the County’s cybersecurity. Next steps include documenting policies and further discussions on how to best meet the minimum standards adopted by the State Board of Elections in November 2019. DoE/GR reported numerous localities were considering removing the registrar’s offices from the locality’s network in order to reduce the potential impact to their networks. She reported this was also being discussed here and seemed to be the least labor-intensive option at this point.

DoE/GR reported the VEBA Annual Conference registrations for Chairman Rader, Vice Chairman Heartwell and new Board member Vaughn had been submitted to accounts payable for payment. She stated the registrations and associated personal payments for Mr. Heartwell’s and Mr. Vaughn’s spouses

were also submitted. She reminded the members they were responsible for making their own hotel reservations and suggested they be made soon to avoid being fully booked.

At 2:40 p.m., on a motion made by Vice Chairman Heartwell and unanimously approved, under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) of the Code of Virginia (2.2-3711(A)(4), and (2.2-3711(A)(34) the Electoral Board went into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel matters and security policies.

The Electoral Board returned to Regular Session at 2:55 p.m. on a motion made by Vice Chairman Heartwell, approved by a unanimous roll-call vote that included collective, and individual, affirmation by each Electoral Board member, that no subject, other than that which was stated in the motion that created the Executive Session, was discussed, and no decision/vote was taken, during the Executive Session.

DoE/GR provided a copy of the draft plans she received from the maintenance manager in regards to the potential renovation of the current office space. Due to delays, the other County offices moving to Greenfield Education and Training Center will not take place until later than originally planned. However, the purchasing staff, who are moving to Greenfield when the space is available, are in agreement to move to a temporary location so the renovations can take place in our building as soon as possible. The maintenance manager is in discussions with the building official to determine what next steps are required to get this project underway. DoE/GR stated the changes would not fix the space problem with the impending no excuse absentee voting coming this fall but it would be better than what she currently has.

The next meeting will begin at 7:00 am on Tuesday, March 3, 2020 in the office of the DoE/GR at 2 East Main Street, Fincastle, for the Electoral Board's tour of the precincts during the Democratic Party Presidential Primary. Canvass of votes will be held on Wednesday, March 4, 2020 at 10:30 am in the second floor conference room of the Circuit Courthouse, 1 West Main Street, Fincastle.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul E. Fitzgerald, Secretary

By temporary secretary, Traci Clark

Approved: March 3, 2020