

Accomack County Electoral Board

January 21, 2020

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 P.M by Chairman Dr. Roger Omwake. Also present was Vice-Chair Marcia Fields, Secretary Nancy Drury Duncan and General Registrar Patricia White.

The first order of business was a review of the minutes of the last meeting. Ms. Fields did not like the manner in which her objection to signing the abstracts of the November election were stated in the draft minutes. Dr. Omwake made a motion to attach a copy of a letter she wrote outlining her objections to signing the abstracts of the election... With that addition, the minutes were accepted and approved with a motion by Ms. Fields and seconded by Ms. Duncan unanimously as written.

The next order of business was an update to board members about the construction going on in the courthouse and the progress on the work at the new office at Sawmill Parkway. Ms. White said the current renovations at the courthouse where her office is located is making it difficult. Absentee voting for the March 3 Democratic Primary has begun and the ballots for that election are stored in her office. They have had to be moved because of the construction. Also, she said, there will be no heat in the entire courthouse after January 24 for an indeterminate period of time. The construction company is supposed to provide space heaters, she said. Ms. White reported that four persons have voted absentee in person and 18 absentee ballots have been mailed. Thus far, indicating a light turnout for the upcoming March 3 election. She said 8000 regular ballots and 500 absentee ballots were ordered and are on site. She said more could be ordered if absentee voting indicated a larger turnout.

Ms. White said the February 24 training of election officials for the March 3 election will be held in the circuit courtroom because the normally used space will not be available due to the courthouse repairs. She said there would be two session that day. One at 2:00 P.M. and one at 7:00 P.M.

Ms. White told the board the renovation work on the new office space is “moving along well” and would possibly be ready for occupancy by May.

Chairman Dr. Roger Omwake said there would be a new board member replacing Ms. Duncan by March 1, 2020 and read a note he wrote thanking her for her many years of service to the electoral board.

Dr. Omwake suggested that board members report to their respective political parties that the chaos in the Registrar’s office was not the fault of the registrar, but the fault of the ongoing renovation at the courthouse.

Ms. White said the county’s IT department wants us to replace the e-pollbooks as they are now six year’s old.

Dr. Omwake revisited the subject of electronic meetings. He noted that a quorum must be physically present at the meeting, which means only one person may be electronically present at any given meeting. This option would be limited to two meetings per year per member. He then made a motion to adopt this policy change. His motion was seconded by Mrs. Duncan and passed unanimously.

The new policy is as follows:

It is the policy of the Accomack County Electoral Board that individual electoral board members may participate in electoral board meetings by electronic means as permitted by Virginia Code 2.2-3708.1. This policy shall apply to the entire membership and without regard to the identity of the member requesting remote participation or the matters that will be considered or voted on at the meeting.

Whenever an individual member wishes to participate from a remote location, the law requires a quorum of the electoral board to be physically assembled at the primary or central meeting location, and there must be arrangements for the voice of the remote participant to be heard by all persons at the primary or central meeting location.

When such individual participation is due to an emergency or personal matter, such participation is limited by law to two meetings of the public body per member per year.

A motion was made by Ms. Fields, and seconded by Ms. Duncan, to go into closed session for the purpose of appointing officers of election. 2.2.371-(a) (1) Code of Virginia. The motion carried unanimously. At 3:00 P.M. the board exited closed session.

Dr. Omwake made a motion that no matters were discussed other than the appointment of election officials. He asked for a roll call vote.,

Ms. Duncan, Aye, Dr. Omwake. Aye, Ms. Fields, Aye. The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:10 P.M.