

Minutes of the Richland County Board of Voter Registration and Elections
Wednesday, December 9, 2015
4:00pm, County Council Chambers

Board Members in Attendance

Ms. Marjorie Johnson, Chair

Ms. Adell Adams, Vice-Chair

Ms. Sylvia Holley (via Conference Call)

Ms. Jane Emerson

Mr. E. Peter Kennedy

Staff in Attendance

Mr. Samuel Selph, Director

Ms. Lillian McBride, Deputy Director

Staff Members – Elections & Voter Registration Department

Others in Attendance

Mr. James Brown, Legislative Delegation

Call to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 4:07 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda

- A motion was made to adopt the meeting's agenda. Seconded. Approved.

Approval of Board Meeting Minutes

- The Board Members reviewed the minutes from October 14, 2015.
- A motion was made to approve the meeting minutes. Seconded. Approved.

Board Chair Comments

- ROA Status to Fund EVR Operations
 - Ms. Johnson reported that the status of the ROA is the same as before but she had been advised to send a personal copy of the ROA to County Council Members because sending does not always mean receiving.

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- The Board is requesting that the needs of the department be taken seriously.
- Funding requests need to be placed in writing and inquiries made as to if other departments are in the same financial position as the Voter Registration & Elections Department.
- Although the department is mandated to conduct elections, the department is currently operating in the red and is facing numerous elections and hours of pay.
- *Proposed Letter to Richland Delegation re: Financing*
 - Ms. Johnson stated that it is the same issue of funding and the department does not have the money to work.
 - At the beginning of the fiscal year, the department received an allocation of money but it was not reasonable to conduct the number of elections within the fiscal year.
 - Ms. Johnson asked for Board discussion regarding the department's financial status.
 - Ms. Emerson requested to receive monthly financial reports and to wait until the report was received before sending a letter.
 - Ms. Johnson stated that the department is not in possession of a tally sheet and that the majority of the budget is human resource bundled.
 - The department does not have control over the pay and the balance and does not know what day to day balances are.
 - Mr. Selph responded that more than 85% of the department's budget is personnel services and that the department's expenditures are done by the County.
 - The department can provide personnel line items and that the department has been prudent with operational line items.
 - During the budget request process, the department requested \$1 million but is currently running a deficit in the poll worker line item.
 - Mr. Selph stated that the department can provide the Board with an accounting budget by the following Monday.

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- There are many upcoming elections in 2016 and he stated his concerns about the expenditures for the Presidential Preference Primary Elections as well as the June Primary Election.
- Mr. Kennedy, Ms. Holley and Ms. Adams all stated that they agreed with sending the letter as proposed.
- Ms. Emerson stated that she was not challenging anything but that the Board should receive a financial report each month and when not received, it calls into question many things.
- With providing proper oversight, the Board approved a budget and should receive an accounting of what has been spent and what has not.
- Ms. Holley responded that if the department is operating in the red, why would a monthly report be needed regarding the department's spending.
- Ms. Johnson stated that Ms. Emerson's comments have been noted and the Board has agreed to send a letter requesting the department's financial standing for public accounting purposes.
- Ms. Johnson indicated that she will request the Director to provide automatic reports that will detail numbers, balances, dates and a few line items; the report will be received during the January 2016 Board Meeting.

Board Comments – Discussion

- Camera Viewing Options

- Mr. Kennedy discussed placing cameras in the rooms where the ballots will be opened for security purposes and to provide additional viewing options for the public.
- Ms. Johnson stated that would be against the law because ballots are not allowed to be photographed.
- Mr. Selph stated that if transparency is the issue at hand, members of all the parties are invited to watch the process.

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- Mr. Kennedy asked whether an opinion regarding the issue can be obtained from the County.
- Ms. Johnson replied that in this instance, the State Election Commission rules as to what is allowed for elections, not Richland County.
- Ms. Holley stated that various representatives should be able to observe the process, but cameras are not a feasible suggestion.
- Strategic Plan
 - Ms. Emerson questioned whether the State Election Commission has a strategic plan.
 - Ms. Johnson replied that the State Elections Commission's goals and objectives are listed on their webpage (www.scvotes.org) and that the department's goals and objectives should be the same as the State Election Commission's goals and objectives.

Director's Comments & Updates

- Municipal Election Assessment
 - Mr. Selph thanked the department's staff for work performed during the recent elections.
 - Although they were small elections, both were basically carried out without glitches, and both elections were certified by the State Election Commission.
 - The run-off election experienced a situation with receiving the database from the State Election Commission that contained errors that had to be corrected.
 - Also during that election, only 3 machines were removed from service.
 - Mr. Selph informed the Board that the department will be responsible for conducting the Eastover election that will take place April 2016.
 - Ms. Johnson stated that the Board needs to build in a contingency plan to cover the department having to conduct unplanned elections in the future.

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- Quarterly Report

- Mr. Selph stated that the Director's Quarterly Report will be a combination of all the year's quarterly reports and will serve as the department's annual report.

Executive Session re: Director's Evaluation & Staffing Assessments; Litigation Status

- A motion was made to proceed into Executive Session to discuss the Director's Evaluation, Staff Assessments and Litigation Status. Seconded. Approved 5-0.
- The Board entered into Executive Session at 4:56pm.
- A motion was made to come out of Executive Session at 6:23pm. Seconded. Approved 5-0.
- The Board indicated that the Director's Evaluation is a personnel matter and will not be discussed in open session and that no decisions were made and there were no actions to report from the Executive Session.

Public Questions & Comments

- None

Adjournment

- There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30pm.

Recorded by: Amie Brunson