

MINUTES: Greene County Electoral Board
August 29, 2022

The Greene County Electoral Board meeting of **August 29, 2022** was held at the office of the Director of Elections (formally “General Registrar”) at 32 Stanard Street in Stanardsville, VA.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by the Chair, Deborah Turck, at 1:08 p.m

IN ATTENDANCE:

Deborah Turck, Chair
Roberta Culbertson, Secretary
Brian O’Regan, member

Jennifer Lewis-Fowler, Director of Elections

Sarah Ratcliff: member of the public

The meeting agenda prepared by the DoE was adopted as amended by the Board.

Old Business

Minutes of previous meetings were reviewed and adopted as amended.

The Board determined to send a final communication to a candidate in the November 2021 election, reminding her that she has thus far not submitted a financial report and has accrued substantial fees as a result. The letter will also notify her that the matter is now with the Commonwealth’s Attorney.

New Business

- A. Early Voting will begin on September 23, 2022 and end on November 5, 2022.
- B. The Board reviewed processes for same day registration, which will begin on October 18, 2022, and reviewed new early registration for 16–17-year-olds who will be 18 by the General November election in the year they turn 18. The Board will explain this opportunity at its high school presentation on September 19, 2022.
- C. Training for Early Voting officials will be held on September 14 and 15, 2022. Training will focus on using correct ballots for precincts that have separate local elections. Training will also cover the procedure for same day registration.

D. The Board reviewed and approved the Director's list of new and potential officers of election and their precinct distribution for election day, November 8, 2022. The Director reported that five new applicants have been added. The Greene County Democratic Party Chair (public member in attendance) reported that the Democratic Party is attempting to recruit other possible election officials from the party. The Board explained that the law requires the presence of members of both parties in all election processes whenever possible, and that volunteers of any party or independents are encouraged to apply.

E. The Electoral Board will present information on the electoral process to all High School government classes on September 19, 2022.

Director of Elections Report

A. There has been a significant increase in FOIA requests to the Greene County office. Some of these are form letters from other states. None have come from Greene County. The answering of such requests is consuming large amounts of time. The Director reported that other Virginia offices are receiving even greater numbers of requests.

B. Ballots have been ordered for the November 8, 2022 election. Sufficient ballots have been ordered for 85% of all registered voters in Greene County.

C. Brian O'Regan moved, Debbie Turck seconded, and the Electoral Board voted to increase the Assistant Chief's payment for election day service. Presently, the Assistant Chief gets the same amount as election officers. Increased responsibilities, particularly with same-day registration and increased provisional ballots, merit higher pay for the day. To the degree feasible within the Director of Elections budget, the following amounts were approved: Chief: \$195; Assistant Chief: \$175; and Election Officer: \$160.

D. The Board discussed paying election officers to attend training but determined that budget limitations make it impossible at this time. The Board also discussed attempting to increase the pool of election officers by offering half-day shifts instead of the current full 15-hour day required. Should new potential and actual election officers step forward, this might be possible, but at present the number of election officers is too small. The Board determined to do more recruiting for officers; it has already gone to the Democratic and Republican parties and the high school. Newspaper articles and other options will be explored after the November election.

E. The Director and the Board discussed possible confusion over precinct voting sites for the November 2022 election. Districts and precincts changed before the June primary; however, in several cases, new or standard precinct locations could not be used due to maintenance. Established emergency sites were used instead. While there was little confusion at the primary, the November election will be larger and more people will need to find their way to the right precinct. The information is already on the Greene County website. Mailers are going out, news articles are scheduled, and 29 News will be contacted to mention Greene elections. Signs will be posted around the county. Banners will be used again to identify turning and parking areas on the day of the election.

F. Efforts to establish a firm emergency site for the Dyke Fire Station continue. The church has given permission to use the basement. The Board will arrange to visit the site for safety and ADA compliance, and arrange for access in case of an emergency on election day.

G. Active Shooter training will be scheduled for early in 2024.

H. L and A testing of voting machines will be conducted in September, 2022.

Public Comments

The Chair of the Greene County Democratic Party spoke during the public comments period. She asked the Board to reconsider the matter of Sunday voting during early voting. The Board stated that it does not seem feasible. Board members pointed out that the costs of more voting days, limitations in available staff and leadership, and options already available argue strongly against adding Sunday voting. Members pointed out that there are 45 early voting days, with two Saturdays and some extended hours in the evening, vote-by-mail, and election day itself, which should accommodate all voters in one way or another.

The speaker explained why Sunday voting was important, particularly for African American voters. Many work six days a week and night shifts, with Sunday their only free day. Without at least one Sunday voting day, they may be unable to vote. She also mentioned that despite the fact that by law employers must give their employees time off on election day, many do not.

The Board discussed the need for more information, including statistics that support the benefits of a Sunday voting option. Brian O'Regan suggested we revisit the topic at the beginning of 2023, with more information and statistics and the opportunity to consider budget and administrative requirements.

The speaker also asked the Board to consider half-days for election officers, pointing out that many people in her party, and likely others, would work if the day were not so long. The Board suggested that with more volunteers this would be possible.

Brian O'Regan moved that the Board return to both issues at the beginning of 2023 and consider them further. Roberta Culbertson seconded and the motion carried.

The public comment session was ended.

Closed Meeting

The Chair announced the need to enter a closed meeting at 4:00 pm in accordance with **Code of Virginia** FOIA statute 2.2-3711; "Closed meetings authorized for certain limited purposes," section A, paragraph 19: "Discussion of plans to protect public safety...or specific cybersecurity threats...where discussion in an open meeting would jeopardize the safety of any person or the security of any facility, building, structure, information technology system, or software program..."

The purpose of the meeting was stated: to review and update plans for compliance with administrative and security standards provided by the Virginia State Department of Elections for 2022-23, and to review office and equipment security.

The Chair moved to close the meeting and the Board agreed by voice vote at 4:00 pm.

Open Meeting

Returning to the open meeting at 5:07 pm, the Chair asked for a certification by individual voice vote that only matters named as the purpose of the meeting were discussed during the closed meeting. All members certified the content of the meeting.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm.


Respectfully Submitted,

Roberta Culbertson, Secretary

Approved:



Debbie Turck, Chair



Roberta Culbertson, Secretary

Brian O'Regan, Vice-Chair