



**Pulaski County Election Commission
Meeting Minutes
July 17, 2020
5:30 p.m.**

Members Present:

Evelyn D. Gomez
Joshua A. Price
Kristi M. Stahr

Staff Present:

Bryan Poe
Betty Green
Jodie Dildy
Amanda Dickens

Visitors Present: Jason Kennedy, Circuit County Clerk's Office

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Chair Gomez. A quorum was present, with all commissioners present via Zoom. The staff and visitors were present via Zoom also. The commissioners gave Director Poe permission to use their signature stamp as necessary during the meeting.

The pledge of allegiance was led by Jodie Dildy.

Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Stahr moved to accept the minutes as written; seconded by Commissioner Price. Motion passed by voice vote.

Business

Provisional Ballot Hearing for the July 7, 2020 Jacksonville Special Election Runoff

There were seven provisional absentee ballots and one UOCAVA ballot. The provisional absentee ballots were counted because the voter signed the optional verification of identification. The UOCAVA ballot was counted also. No voters were present for the provisional ballot hearing. Commissioner Price moved for the certification of the provisional ballots for the July 7, 2020 Jacksonville Special Election Runoff; seconded by Commissioner Stahr. Motion passed by voice vote.

Certification of Official Election Results for the July 7, 2020 Jacksonville Special Election Runoff

Commissioner Stahr moved for the certification of the election results for the July 7, 2020 Jacksonville Special Election Runoff; seconded by Commissioner Price. Motion passed by voice vote.

Other Business

Discussion of the Memo to the Prosecuting Attorney

Director Poe spoke with Prosecuting Attorney Larry Jegley regarding the information needed to be provided to his office regarding the incident on February 11, 2020 at one of the polling locations. He was told to that information that was sent in previous incidents was the only thing needed. Commissioner Stahr moved to send the memo to the prosecuting attorney regarding a provisional ballot cast at St. Mark Baptist Church on February 11, 2020; seconded by Commissioner Price. Motion passed by voice vote.

Discussion of the COVID-19 Mitigation Procedures for In-Person Voting

Commissioner Price requested clarification regarding the executive order issued by Governor Hutchison and the provision regarding masks being worn by voters. Director Poe stated that the suggestions from the commissioners had been implemented in the plan as well as the language regarding the use of masks from Governor Hutchison's executive order. The PPE supplies provided by the Secretary of State's office has been included in the plan also. Commissioner Stahr requested that the plan be changed to say that election officials shall be required to wear masks at the polling locations. Chair Gomez requested the discussion be tabled until the next meeting. Later in the meeting the decision was made that the commissioners would vote on this plan today. Commissioner Stahr moved to approve the COVID-19 mitigation plan with the following amendments to reflect the document is from the election commission, with the names of the commissioners in the header and the footer of the document and effective date and revision dates in the footer with the understanding that this is a living document that could change at any time; seconded by Commissioner Price. Motion passed by voice vote.

Discussion of CARES Act PPE Supplies Provided by the Secretary of State

Chair Gomez requested clarification regarding when the list of PPE supplies was received. Director Poe stated that he received it on Thursday, the day before the meeting. Chair Gomez requested clarification regarding where the list was sent. Director Poe stated it was sent to the clerk's office. Chair Gomez requested clarification as to whether the commissioners would be involved in the process of determining the amount of supplies requested and whether the form has been completed. Mr. Kennedy stated the form has not been completed and that the clerk's

office has a meeting scheduled on Monday, July 20, 2020 at 9:30 a.m. with the Secretary of State's Office.

Chair Gomez requested for the commissioners be a part of the process for determining the supplies needed for the election. Commissioner Stahr requested clarification regarding why the clerk's office has been charged this task since the elections are the primary responsibility of the Election Commission. Director Poe stated that the clerk's office has been designated as the primary contact. Commissioner Stahr and Commissioner Price also feel that the commissioners need to be involved in the process since the clerk is not the decision maker for the election commission. Chair Gomez requested one of the commissioners attend the meeting on Monday. Commissioner Stahr requested clarification regarding who the meeting is with. Mr. Kennedy responded that it was Kurt Nauman. Chair Gomez requested the meeting to be rescheduled. Mr. Kennedy stated that the Secretary of State's Office requested the meeting. Since Mr. Kennedy was unable to determine if the meeting could be rescheduled, Chair Gomez requested Director Poe to attend the meeting.

Discussion of the General Election Absentee Canvassing Plan

Director Poe presented the plans with implementations that the commissioners suggested. Commissioner Stahr requested that a spreadsheet regarding the number of absentee ballot requests that are coming in to be included in the plan. Mr. Kennedy stated that so far there are about 4,300 current requests about a 200% increase over the 2016 Presidential election. This will enable the commission to have a rough estimate of the number of votes that will be cast. This will be utilized to educate voters regarding casting absentee ballots. Director Poe requested that the plan be approved with the understanding that it is a living plan to provide something in writing to provide clarity. Chair Gomez requested this discussion be tabled until the next meeting. Later in the meeting the decision was made to vote on the plan. Commissioner Stahr moved for the approval of the General Election Absentee Canvassing Plan with the following amendments to reflect the document is from the election commission, with the names of the commissioners in the header and the footer of the document and effective date and revision dates in the footer with the understanding that this is a living document that could change at any time; seconded by Commissioner Price. Motion passed by voice vote.

Discussion of Election Official Survey

Commissioner Price requested that a spreadsheet be created to track the responses from the election officials to the survey. Commissioner Stahr requested to add an estimated percentage of election officials that might contract COVID-19 in the next 90 days, percentage of election officials that might be hesitant to work, and the

percentage that can be added as a surplus should someone need to be replaced. Commissioner Stahr agreed to set up an account on www.joinhandshake.com as a means to recruit election officials. Once she sets it up it will be turned over to Director Poe and Assistant Director Camp for management of the site.

Discussion of Training Materials

Director Poe will try to present the training materials to the commissioners the week of July 20-24, 2020 for them to review it. Director Poe requested the commissioners to meet on July 30, 2020 to finalize/approve the materials. The meeting will be at 7:00 p.m. on July 30, 2020. He explained that most of the material was provided by the State Board of Election Commissioners, Faulkner County and Washington County. The procedures for Faulkner and Washington Counties have been approved by the State Board of Election Commissioners.

Discussion of Vote Center Contingency Plan

Director Poe explained the changes to the plan since the previous discussion. Chair Gomez requested that he reach out to Central Arkansas Library System to possibly use Terry Library as an option. Director Poe stated that the document will need to be approved before it can be presented to the Quorum Court for their approval for the August meeting. Commissioner Price requested the commissioners to review the plan and be prepared to vote on it on July 30, 2020. Commissioner Stahr stated that the plans needed to be voted on today because there are other interested parties that need the plans today. Director Poe suggested that a disclaimer be added to the plan. The disclaimer will be: "This is our intent for elections in Pulaski County going forward until it is amended. However, due to COVID-19 and the voluntary nature by which organizations provide the facilities to us for the purpose of voting, this may not be what is reflected in the 2020 General Election." The commissioners agreed with the disclaimer. Commissioner Stahr moved for the approval of the Vote Center Contingency Plan with the ability to pursue another early vote location in West Little Rock; seconded by Commissioner Price. Motion passed by voice vote.

Implementation of Templates for Plans

Commissioner Stahr suggested that a standardized template be developed to reflect the disclaimers. Commissioner Price suggested to add the data points that are being tracked by added to the template.

Redesigning the Website

In 2021, Commissioner Stahr would like to hire an outside company to redesign the website. She would like for monies to be appropriated in the 2021 budget for this to

take place. Mr. Dildy explained that he has the information regarding redesigning the website and that it would just be a matter of obtaining the financing.

Defeating Misinformation

Commissioner Stahr would like for the commissioners to develop a plan for focusing on utilizing graphics for defeating any misinformation that is presented to voters. The commissioners will work with the staff in providing the correct information for the voters. Director Poe stated that Cozetta Jones, the communication liaison, will be able to push out the information on the county's links also. Commissioner Stahr and Commissioner Price will work up the graphics from lists that are provided by Director Poe.

Update on Election Official and Polling Location Surveys

Director Poe shared that of the returned surveys, 279 have said yes, they would work, 150 have said no and 45 have given ambiguous responses. Commissioner Stahr requested that as the numbers are updated to provide the numbers to the commissioners via Microsoft Teams.

Director Poe shared that 39 polling location surveys that have been returned, 35 have said yes, two said no and two gave ambiguous responses. This information will be provided to the commissioners via Microsoft Teams. Director Poe will contact the polling locations to see what they would need from the election commission for the location to be open on election day.

Upcoming Filing Dates

Municipal filing period is July 29-August 5, 2020.

School filing period is July 27-August 3, 2020.

Schedule of Upcoming Meetings

July 30, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. for review/approval of the vote center plan and training materials.

August 21, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. for review of the political practice pledges for the November 3, 2020 General Election.

August 24, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. for ballot draw for the November 3, 2020 General Election.

Meeting adjourned at 6:36 p.m.