

**August 20, 2020 PRE GENERAL ELECTION MEETING OF THE  
DELAWARE COUNTY ELECTION BOARD**

**PRESENT:** Gerald Lawrence, Chairman  
Jim Byrne  
Ashley Lunkenheimer  
J. Manly Parks, Board Solicitor

Also Present: Laureen Hagan, Bureau of Elections  
Marianne Jackson, Bureau of Elections  
Jim Savage, Voting Machine Warehouse

Pledge of Allegiance.

Public comments. Mr. Lawrence explained the regular meeting order would be adjusted to start with the reading of a significant number of public comments received regarding the County's plans to install 50 drop boxes in municipalities for voters to deposit their mail-in ballots. For more than four hours, Ms. Hagan with assistance from Mr. Lawrence and Ms. Lunkenheimer read hundreds of comments into the official meeting record. Residents were overwhelmingly in support of the use of drop boxes leading up to and during the general election in November.

Support for the use of drop boxes was expressed through many variations on common themes: prefer hand delivery of ballots; ensures free and fair elections during a pandemic; votes are protected, received on time and counted; need alternative to having fewer polling places and potential mail delivery issues ; safe, secure, and simple non-partisan way to vote; enables vulnerable voters to safely vote; makes voting more accessible and doesn't put voter health at risk of potential covid-19 infection ; ability to use grant money rather than taxpayer dollars to pay for the drop boxes; drop boxes are a good alternative when work responsibilities preclude in-person voting; drop boxes have been successfully used in mail-in ballot only states; support drop boxes with video surveillance.

Comments were expressed in opposition to the use of drop boxes: potential for drop boxes to be vandalized; voting should be done in person; the County is ignoring the possibility of mail-in balloting leading to voter fraud.

During the reading of public comments, Mr. Lawrence explained in response to a question that ballots may be dropped off at the Election Bureau Office in Media until the close of business on Election Day. He added there would be a discussion and potentially a vote later in the meeting regarding the use of drop boxes.

Additional points made by those present during the reading of public comments:

- Ms. Hagan explained state certification of ballots is expected to occur by September 1<sup>st</sup>. The County Election Bureau subsequently anticipates being able to begin sending out ballots the week of September 14<sup>th</sup> assuming timely state certification and upon successful completion of the County's testing process. At Ms. Lunkenheimer's request, Ms. Hagan explained that interested registered Delaware County residents can write to [Delcoelection@co.delaware.pa.us](mailto:Delcoelection@co.delaware.pa.us) to express their willingness to volunteer at a poll location.

- Mr. Parks explained a form of early voting currently exists under Pennsylvania law (Act 77) to the extent a voter could come into an authorized Election Board office and request, receive, and return a completed ballot all in one visit. In expressing concern with the potential for “ballot harvesting”, Mr. Byrne noted that voters should only deliver their own ballots unless they have some disability that would preclude that. Mr. Parks agreed and indicated a form can be completed in circumstances where it may be necessary for a disabled person to appoint a representative to act on their behalf to drop off their ballot.
- Mr. Parks queried in the interest of time and proceeding forward with the agenda whether it was necessary to read all comments in their entirety that expressed similar messages. Mr. Byrne believed the law required that all comments be heard before the Board took a vote. Mr. Lawrence made a chairman’s decision to continue to hear all comments in their entirety notwithstanding the unprecedented number of comments received.
- Ms. Hagan clarified that voters may only deposit their own ballots in drop boxes. She added that postage will only be charged for ballots returned through the mail and the County will seek state reimbursement for postage expenses. Mr. Byrne clarified that taxpayers not the state will be reimbursing the County for postage expenses.
- At Ms. Lunkenheimer’s request, Ms. Hagan explained that ballot applications are available online or by calling the Bureau of Elections at 610-891-4673 to have an application sent to eligible voters to complete and return by mail or hand delivery. Mr. Parks remarked that under state law physical application forms shall be made freely available to the public at county board of elections, municipal buildings and other locations designated by the Secretary of the Commonwealth. He added that the electronic application forms shall be made freely available to the public through publicly available means.

Motion to consider deployment of drop boxes. Mr. Lawrence introduced a motion previously suggested by Ms. Jackson regarding the deployment of drop boxes and Mr. Byrne seconded it for discussion. Mr. Byrne acknowledged that while many of the public comments were repetitive, the law requires the Board to listen to them. He asserted that nothing in the Election Code allows drop boxes and it’s not appropriate for the Board or the Department of State to overstep it’s authority by interpreting, changing, or making law. The legislature is responsible for making law. Ms. Lunkenheimer commented people are scared of dying during the current covid-19 outbreak. She maintained during such an unprecedented time that it’s incumbent on the Board to help people by ensuring a fair, free, and safe election consistent with the law. Mr. Lawrence noted that the Election Code does not specify the location where the County may receive ballots but added that ballots have been received at multiple locations in the past. Mr. Byrne expressed concern about voting on the motion without knowing specifically where the drop boxes will be located in each municipality. The motion carried 2 to 1 with Ms. Lunkenheimer and Mr. Lawrence voting yes and Mr. Byrne voting no.

Poll worker compensation. The Board combined polling locations during the June 2020 primary. Mr. Lawrence explained that he was informed that poll workers were led to believe by community members recruiting them to serve that they would be paid for the number of precincts worked. A total of 28 people worked at more than two precincts. Board members voted unanimously that those people should be paid for each of the precincts where they worked.

Training incentive payment. Mr. Lawrence highlighted a proposal to use grant funding rather than taxpayer dollars to provide compensation up to \$100 per person to attend in-depth training that would better prepare them for serving at polls. Board members decided to defer a vote to allow time to gather more information.

Change of polling locations. Mr. Savage explained there was bipartisan agreement and/or petitions on proposals for moving precincts as follows:

1. Chester Heights from Chester Heights Fire Department to Garnet Valley Middle School
2. Concord Township 1 from Darlington Arts Center to Garnet Valley Middle School
3. Eddystone North from Eddystone Borough Hall to Lighthouse Hall
4. Haverford 2-1 from Llanerch Fire Company to Manoa School
5. Haverford 2-2 from Haverford District Court to old Sacred Heart School
6. Haverford 3-3 from Haverford School District Administration building to old Haverford Friends Meeting
7. Haverford 7-1 from Brookline Fire Company to Haverford Township Administration building
8. Media West from Delaware County to new polling location at Blue Route Vineyard Community Church
9. Middletown 1-1, 1-2, and 1-3 from Middletown Fire Company #1 to new polling location at Roosevelt Community Center
10. Nether Providence 1-1 and 1-2 from Holy Trinity Church to Strath Haven High School
11. Nether Providence 3 from Helen K. Furness Free Library to Strath Haven High School.

In response to a question from Mr. Lawrence, Mr. Savage confirmed that the two new polling locations have been surveyed for ADA compliance and he's unaware of any public objections to the proposed changes. Likewise, Ms. Hagan reported seeing no submissions regarding polling place changes. Board members voted unanimously to approve the proposed changes.

Satellite voting centers. Mr. Lawrence asked if separate motions could be made for discussion regarding the possibility of establishing satellite voting centers in Upper Darby and the City of Chester for the November general election. Ms. Lunkenheimer moved a motion for an Upper Darby location and Mr. Byrne seconded. Mr. Lawrence and Ms. Lunkenheimer voted to approve the motion with Mr. Byrne abstaining due to not having enough information. The motion carried 2-0. Ms. Lunkenheimer made a motion seconded by Mr. Byrne for instructing Ms. Jackson to investigate and propose for the Board's consideration a location in the City of Chester for a satellite voting location. The motion carried with the unanimous vote of Board members to approve.

Poll worker training. Ms. Lunkenheimer moved a motion seconded by Mr. Byrne and Mr. Lawrence to allow Ms. Jackson to use grant money already received by the County to pay for the

creation of poll worker training modules. The motion carried with the unanimous vote of Board members.

Next meeting. Mr. Lawrence indicated the Board would work with Ms. Hagan to select the next meeting date to occur immediately after Labor Day.