

A meeting of the Board of Elections Commissioners of St. Louis County was held by video conference, Tuesday, March 24, 2020 due to the new coronavirus pandemic and subsequent executive order.

Present at the meeting were:

Sharon Buchanan-McClure	Chair
Trudi McCollum Foushee	Secretary
Matthew Potter	Commissioner
Peggy Barnhart	Commissioner
Steve Garrett	Attorney
Rick Stream	Director
Eric Fey	Director
Christian Tolbert	Deputy Director
Julie Leicht	Deputy Director

Chair Buchanan-McClure called the meeting to order and a roll call was taken. A quorum was present.

Secretary Foushee moved that the meeting be closed pursuant to RSMo 610.021(1),(2),(3),(12) and (13) to discuss litigation, real estate, and personnel matters. Commissioner Barnhart seconded the motion and the votes were as follows: Chair Buchanan-McClure, aye; Secretary Foushee, aye; Commissioner Barnhart, aye; Commissioner Potter, aye.

The Board re-opened the meeting. No one signed up to speak at the Public Forum. Chair Buchanan-McClure then asked if everyone had read the minutes from the February 18 meeting. Secretary Foushee made a motion that the minutes be approved and Commissioner Barnhart seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the minutes were approved. Chair Buchanan-McClure then stated all other minutes would be dealt with at the next meeting.

Chair Buchanan-McClure called for the directors' reports. Director Stream deferred his report regarding our response to coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic and meeting policies.

Director Fey recapped the March 10 Presidential Preference Primary election. It was overall a successful day. It was a rough opening in the early morning as the electronic poll books were not syncing with the poll book printers. While the County routers were not prepared for the amount of data we had, they will be in the future. By staying late Friday, March 20<sup>th</sup>, the certification process was expedited completing the March election in advance of the County Executive order. The candidate filing deadline for the August election ends Tuesday, March 31<sup>st</sup>, and the executive order to postpone the April election kept the write-in deadline for Friday, March 27<sup>th</sup> at 5pm. We plan to mail absentee applications to all voters over the age of 60 in St. Louis County in order to lower the amount of people in the polling places. With increased absentee voting we plan to halve the number of polling places in order to meet the new reality of fewer election judges and buildings willing to be available during this pandemic. Poll Pad Judges (about 875 people) will be trained in our office, which will be spread out to implement social distancing. All other workers will be trained remotely.

Deputy Director Tolbert discussed using an application generating voter tickets electronically on the Poll Pad, which would eliminate the voter ticket printers. Deputy Director Tolbert updated registered voter counts for the month of February; 642,544 active voters, 93,954 inactive voters totaling 736,598 registered voters. He then reiterated Director Fey and explained that the volume of data going through REJIS was on a private network, which will not happen again per Verizon. There are only three people in the Logistics department. Staff is currently replenishing the supplies in the cages, removing all of the v-Drives from the equipment from the March election. Deputy Director Tolbert then announced that our Desktop Support Manager, Ray Schindler, will be retiring at the end of the month, and our IT Manager, Inessa Spring, was hired by the County Health Department after the March election. A REJIS Support Manager is filling in until the positions are filled.

Deputy Director Leicht reported fear of COVID-19 resulted in 111 cancellations the Monday before the election and another 59 election morning, resulting in the most challenging election to staff in her experience at the Board of Elections. The department is sending out poll worker paychecks, which were quarantined for 24 hours when they were received in our office. For March, there were 900 new workers which was a third of the workforce. The new equipment worked well. Problems that occurred were related to the Poll Pads, not the new machines. This led to the decision to retrain the Poll Pad Judges in-house. There was also some confusion with the Managers and their duties, although not much has changed. The Training department will be making videos to explain in-depth what the role of a Manager is. The Mapping/Polling Places department is working on consolidating the locations for the rescheduled municipal election in June, and we will wait a few weeks during the pandemic before we reach out to the polling places. Hopefully we will only use public buildings which would require less staff, and turnout will be fairly low. If we can reduce traffic with the absentee voters, that would also reduce traffic at the polling places which is a concern during the COVID-19 crisis. We have tentatively secured the four absentee voting centers for the June election, but the Public Works department has to approve the request according to the County Executive's order. Finally, the HR/Accounting department is wrapping up the March election and waiting for all of the districts to pay their bills, and organizing overtime for the upcoming elections.

There was nothing to discuss under Old Business.

Under New Business, Director Stream explained how our office is planning around the COVID-19 pandemic. For the March election, we provided hand sanitizer and antibacterial wipes at each polling place to protect the equipment, the workers, and the voters. However, we were not able to purchase enough given the short notice. Director Stream reached out to John Brunner, owner of GermX, who donated 92 bottles of hand sanitizer, which we thanked him for on our social media pages. We implemented our reduced staff workforce plan on Monday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>. This plan divided staff into two teams, 1 in each department preserving bipartisan staffing, alternating weekly. If an employee does not feel comfortable coming into work during their scheduled week, they may use their PTO to stay home and quarantine with no penalties. County Executive Page mentioned that the Board of Elections was an essential service. The cafeteria was deep-cleaned, flat surfaces are wiped down once a day and handles twice a day. The weekly staff meeting was conducted via video conference in order to maintain social

distancing. We were able to borrow a thermometer from Kirkwood High School to take each employee's temperature every morning. So far everyone's temperature has been below 100 degrees, but if someone is higher than that, they will be sent home. All of our mail is being quarantined for 24 hours upon receipt. If an employee comes in contact with a person who has been potentially infected, they will be sent home. Today, a temporary employee was sent home because they were in Wisconsin over the weekend, which is a state included in the County's travel advisory. We have implemented several lunch shifts in order to limit 6-8 people maximum in the cafeteria. Finally, if an employee tests positive for COVID-19, our office would be required to shut down for fourteen days. Director Stream then discussed opportunities for the public to view future Board meetings virtually. We will be working with County IT to put a call-in number on our agenda, which will also allow for public forum.

Under Financial/Budget, Director Stream explained the February reports.

There was nothing to discuss under Personnel.

There were no legal matters to discuss in the open meeting.

Chair Buchanan-McClure announced that the Board would adjourn after the closed session. Secretary Foushee moved that the meeting be closed pursuant to RSMo 610.021(1),(2),(3), (12) and (13) to discuss litigation, real estate, and personnel matters. Commissioner Barnhart seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the votes were as follows: Chair Buchanan-McClure, aye; Secretary Foushee, aye; Commissioner Barnhart, aye; Commissioner Potter, aye.



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Sharon Buchanan-McClure, Chair



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Trudi McCollum Foushee, Secretary