

A meeting of the Board of Elections Commissioners of St. Louis County was held by video conference, Tuesday, May 19, 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic and subsequent executive order. Four members of the public took the opportunity to attend the meeting by calling into a conference line.

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.

No one submitted comment for the Public Forum. Chair Buchanan-McClure mentioned that there were outstanding minutes that had been approved but not yet signed, and made a motion to allow for electronic signatures in order for the minutes to be properly posted on the website, and for these electronic signatures to be used exclusively for the unsigned minutes prior to this meeting. Secretary Foushee seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion was approved. Chair Buchanan-McClure then asked if everyone had read the minutes from the April 21 meeting. Commissioner Potter made a motion that the minutes be approved as amended and Secretary Foushee seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the minutes were approved. Chair Buchanan-McClure then asked if everyone had read the closed minutes from the April 21 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.

Before calling for the directors' reports, Chair Buchanan-McClure modified the agenda for efficiency, and added "Legislative Update" item under New Business, and switched the order of New and Old Business.

Chair Buchanan-McClure then called for the directors' reports. Director Stream explained our worst case scenario process, which allows to have a back-up site with a spare set of equipment and a generator should an emergency happen on Election Day. Chair Buchanan-McClure said this was good planning. Director Stream then deferred the other directors' reports to New and Old Business.

Under New Business, a request for destruction of records from the February and April 2018 elections was made by Craig Hite, Supervisor of the Logistics department. Commissioner Foushee made a motion to approve the destruction of records, and Commissioner Potter seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the motion was approved. Chair Buchanan-McClure

then asked for the directors to provide an update of the recent legislation regarding elections that was passed last week. Director Stream explained Senate Bill 631, which adds an excuse directly related to COVID-19 available to voters aged 65 and over, voters in nursing homes, and voters who have chronic lung disease, moderate to severe asthma, heart conditions, diabetes, kidney disease, liver disease, or compromised immune systems. Voting absentee for this reason would not require the ballot to be notarized. The bill also added a new mail-in ballot provision that any voter can apply for without an excuse. These ballots can only be applied for through the mail or in-person, and the ballots, which must be notarized, must be returned through the mail. While this bill was passed with a nearly veto-proof majority in both chambers of the legislature, it has yet to be signed by the governor. Chair Buchanan-McClure asked if this has an emergency clause, and Director Stream replied that it does, and the governor has 45 days to sign it. Commissioner Potter asked if the governor is likely to sign it, and Director Stream replied that he has heard he is, but that is subject to change. The Board and directors then discussed the bill.

The Board and directors discussed whether or not this bill could potentially apply to the June 2 election. Director Fey announced that if/when the governor signs it, our next step would be to send new affidavit envelopes and applications to Mulligan Printing.

Under Old Business, Chair Buchanan-McClure asked for the directors to explain how the June election will be implemented. Deputy Director Leicht provided the Board with staffing and training numbers. We need about 1,700 workers to staff 159 locations. As of today, we only have 22 vacancies. We have doubled our standbys due to expected last-minute cancellations. At the beginning of the staffing process, 1,143 workers said they were not available, with 560 of those being related to COVID-19. 72% of workers for this election are over the age of 60, and 36% are over 70, which is slightly less than past elections. Online training classes are being utilized by half of our workers, who are being reimbursed for taking the class online. In-person training has been successful and is about halfway done. All workers are seated six-feet apart and are having their temperatures checked as they come in. They are also wearing gloves and masks, which are required in order to work, although some workers have left class as they refuse to wear them. Finally, Deputy Director Leicht announced that the last day to mail ballots for the June election is tomorrow, May 20. All staff is working furiously to get applications processed, and we have 30 ballot opening teams ready to open ballots. At present time, we have received over 20,000 ballots in the mail.

Deputy Director Tolbert announced that logic and accuracy testing has been completed on the machines, and that equipment delivery has been moved up due to the Memorial Day holiday. The known testing of equipment will take place this Thursday, May 21, and the public test will take place a week later. The polling place change postcards have been mailed, and the notice of election cards are being processed and will go out this week. Deputy Director Tolbert explained that the Secretary of State's office will be delivering protective plastic shields for workers, however, this may present a challenge as the workers will have to assemble them on sight. Of course, workers will have face masks provided, and the shields would be an added layer of protection. Finally, Deputy Director Tolbert announced that we will be using a new public network from Verizon, which required an update of all equipment that connects to a cellular network. The Board and directors discussed the issue of security with the public network. The Board requested

directors to obtain a letter from Verizon verifying the security of the open network for election purposes.

Chair Buchanan-McClure then asked for the directors to explain what impact the recently passed SB 631 has on how our office will handle absentee ballots for June, and the general mechanics of how absentee ballots are processed. Director Fey explained that we do not foresee any impact from SB 631 on the June election, as the deadline to mail ballots is tomorrow. Director Fey mentioned that as of today, we have received over 66,000 absentee applications, which is the most in St. Louis County history. We have already received back over 21,000 ballots from voters. Director Fey then explained the mechanics of application processing. Once we receive a request from a voter (either through mail, email, fax, or in-person), we process the application through MCVR. At the end of each day, we batch a secure file and send it to Mulligan Printing, who then inserts the ballots into envelopes and mails them to the voters. The voter then receives the ballot, completes it, inserts it into the return envelope, has the envelope notarized (if applicable), and sends it back to our office. Once we receive the ballots, bipartisan teams check them for completion. If the ballot is missing a notary or signature, we send it back to voter with correspondence. Five days before each election we begin to open the ballots, with bipartisan teams checking for damage (must be duplicated) and verifying the signatures. The ballots are then scanned with a high-speed scanner that tabulates the votes. The Board and directors then discussed the process of rejecting ballots based on signature discrepancies and the importance of providing specific instructions for absentee voters.

Chair Buchanan-McClure then asked the directors to explain the process of reducing polling places. Deputy Director Leicht explained that the Polling Places department was instructed to make certain that voters would not have to travel more than 7.5 minutes to their polling location. In addition, the metro bus routes were overlaid on the polling location map to estimate driving and walking times in relation to each polling place.

Under Financial/Budget, Director Stream explained the financial reports. Chair Buchanan-McClure mentioned an issue of line items under Minor Office Furniture and Fixtures, which should really be under Capital Outlays. Director Stream explained that the County's procedure is to only place items more than \$5,000 under Capital Outlays. Chair Buchanan-McClure said that this negatively skews our budget. The Board requested directors to discuss with the County this procedure and to re-categorize budget items in certain categories. Director Stream then discussed the 2021 budget. Our proposed budget will be presented to the Board at the June meeting, as directors will begin to meet with each department next week. Once the budget is approved by the Board, it will then go to the County in July.

Under Personnel, Director Stream explained the personnel report.

Under Legal, Attorney Garrett discussed the dismissal of the case in Cole County related to absentee voting and COVID-19. He explained that the theme of the dismissal was that while the incapacity/confinement due to illness excuse does speak of illness, it does not meet the issue of the concern to contract an illness. The plain reading is that an illness is something you have, a fear of an illness is not.

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.



Sharon Buchanan-McClure, Chair



Trudi McCollum Foushee, Secretary