

A meeting of the Board of Elections Commissioners of St. Louis County was held by video conference, Tuesday, September 1, 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic and subsequent executive order. 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. Commissioner Potter joined the meeting at 2:30pm. A quorum was established.

Chair Buchanan-McClure indicated that written public comments will be submitted into the record. One person requested to speak at the Public Forum. Mary Reithert thanked the Board for their leadership during this pandemic, and expressed her appreciation for the public access of these meetings. Ms. Reithert had (2) questions: Will all absentee and mail-in ballots be mailed on September 22, or is the mailing staggered? And, what is the date we begin the processing and tabulating of absentee and mail-in ballots? Director Stream responded we plan to send out between 50,000-90,000 ballots on September 22. In accordance with state statute, We begin opening ballots in bipartisan teams five days before Election Day, and tabulation begins when the polls close on Election Day. The Public Forum was then closed.

Chair Buchanan-McClure announced two additional agenda topics: the potential survey of requested but unreturned absentee ballots and a communication plan.

The Board discussed the possibility of surveying individuals who did not return their absentee ballots in August. Dr. Kimball, Professor of Political Science at UMSL, and Lori Fiegel, Strategy & Innovation Analyst, will work to develop a survey instrument.

The Board then discussed the staff draft of a communication plan. Commissioner Barnhart mentioned there is no mention of a press release or any sort of PSA (public service announcement). Deputy Director Tolbert replied that we have met with a media company that is also working with the St. Charles County Election Board.

The Board then discussed whether or not to take a position on the Missouri Association of County Clerks and Election Authorities' resolution regarding no-excuse absentee voting. Director Fey explained this has been a unanimous and bipartisan resolution for the past several years. Chair Buchanan-McClure explained the different ways we could take a position. Commissioner Potter made a motion to endorse the concept of no-excuse absentee subject to

specific legislation. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Barnhart. A vote was taken and the votes were as follows: Chair Buchanan-McClure, aye; Secretary Foushee, aye; Commissioner Potter, aye; Commissioner Barnhart, aye.

#### Budget

Chair Buchanan-McClure reported that she and the directors met with the St. Louis County Budget Director. The Budget Director explained that \$20 million must be cut from the 2021 budget. Chair Buchanan-McClure provided the talking points we presented.

At this time, Commissioner Potter and Director Fey left the meeting.

#### Recap:

- Provide clear statistics on absentee voting numbers
- Create a comprehensive communication plan
- Firm timelines from Mulligan for potential mailing
- Have a sample mailer ready by 9/15 meeting
- Revisit strategic planning at 9/15 meeting

Chair Buchanan-McClure announced the Board would adjourn after 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.



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Sharon Buchanan-McClure, Chair



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Trudi McCollum Foushee, Secretary

Public Comments:

Sarah Mayer, 12602 Mason Forest Dr., Creve Coeur, MO 63141

I'm writing to express my sentiments which are strongly in favor of sending out applications for absentee ballots by mail to all St. Louis County voters. This is one of the best methods of combining safe voting options with ensuring that the spread and threat of the coronavirus stays low.

Please pass this measure.

Caroline Miller, Webster Groves

I listened to the last board meeting and understand that several items are under consideration for the November 2020 election.

I would like to offer two comments:

1. Mailing absentee ballot applications to every registered voter is a good idea and necessary for this election. Clear instructions will help educate voters and assist them in navigating through a complex and confusing process. More people will understand that they are eligible to vote absentee and this will relieve the burden on Election Day for our polling place workers.
2. Satellite locations should have curbside voting and absentee ballot drop-off locations when they open up for regular absentee voting. Since curbside will not be offered at polling places on election day to those who are not comfortable going inside due to COVID (per the letter to the editor by two of the commissioners in today's Post-Dispatch), offering this option will help those who are eligible vote safely in advance of election day. It will reduce phone calls from people checking to see if their ballot was received by mail and will also help reduce the pressure of longer lines on election day.

Thank you for considering these suggestions and for all the work you do to make sure we have safe, secure and fair elections in St. Louis County.

Debbie Cole, 8 Graeser Acres, 63146

I believe it is imperative that ballot applications be sent out to all registered voters along with ballot information due to the fact that there has been so much misinformation about voting. This process has been made unnecessarily complicated by having both mail-in and absentee ballots and by requiring notaries for some ballots and not others.

Send out ballot applications to all registered voters and do it now.

Nancy J. Miller and Louise Wilkerson, Co-Presidents, League of Women Voters-Metro St. Louis

The Metro League of Women Voters appreciates the dedication to serving the citizens of St. Louis that we see in the Board of Elections. We appreciate your support for instituting additional procedures, procuring up-to-date equipment, and materials to facilitate optimum voting in our county. We also ask you to consider instituting additional practices in order to increase the voter participation in the November 2020 election as well as future elections.

The decision made in the spring to facilitate absentee voting requests for voters 60+years resulted in a record number of absentee ballots. The Metro St Louis League includes over 350 members in St. Louis County. We urge you to continue supporting the right to vote even in a pandemic and mail out early voting request forms to all voters. We are hopeful there will be additional funding from the COVID-related funds to assist with this effort. We stand ready to assist you in any way we can, including providing educational media and materials to all voters and protection at the polls as a partner in the Voter Protection Coalition. We continue to register voters, give presentations explaining the voting process, respond to numerous phone inquiries concerning all facets of the voting process, and provide information and materials to senior residences and nursing homes in the county.

At the League, we understand some changes that would assist voters and improve the collection of ballots, such as drop boxes, are not allowed according to current election statutes, while providing absentee request forms to all registered voters is not forbidden. In addition, encouraging the USPS in the St. Louis Region to allow two deliveries a day for official election documents in the weeks before the election, which was a standard practice in the past, would provide a more efficient, timely processing of requests and ballots.

We stand ready to assist you in any way we can including providing educational media and materials to all voters, protection at the polls as a partner in the Voter Protection Coalition. We continue to respond to numerous phone inquiries concerning all facets of the voting process and provide information and materials to senior residences in the county.

We ask you to join us in our continuing efforts to educate voters and support the election process.