

A meeting of the Board of Elections Commissioners of St. Louis County was held by video conference, Tuesday, October 20, 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. A quorum was present.

Chair Buchanan-McClure made the following statement:

“We are 15 days away from the general election.

This general election will probably be the most complicated to administer in history due to an ongoing pandemic and a high interest presidential election. Permanent staff and all of our temporary employees are working feverishly to do the best job they possibly can under these circumstances.

As Commissioners, we frequently have people come up to us to comment about their voting experience. Whether they called with questions, voted absentee in person or delivered a mailed ballot in person or mailed in a ballot, the most frequent comments are the process was easier than expected and the staff unflinchingly courteous. This is such a tribute to our staff.

It appears that every means by which a person can vote in St. Louis County will be done by larger numbers than ever before whether that person is voting by mail, voting absentee by mail, voting in person absentee or dropping off a ballot in person that had been requested with the possible exception of voting on election day.

The St. Louis County Board of Elections staff and Commissioners are constantly exploring how we can use technology and new and different means to meet the challenges this election cycle presents.

This is our obligation to the voters of St. Louis County.”

Chair Buchanan-McClure asked if everyone had read the open and closed minutes from the August 18 meeting. Commissioner Potter made a motion that the open minutes be approved as

amended and the closed minutes be approved and Commissioner Barnhart seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the minutes were approved. Chair Buchanan-McClure then asked if everyone had read the open and closed minutes from the September 29 meeting. Secretary Foushee made a motion that the open minutes be approved as amended and the closed minutes be approved and Commissioner Potter seconded the motion. A vote was taken and the minutes were approved.

Chair Buchanan-McClure asked if everyone had read the directors' reports. Deputy Director Tolbert discussed the website and the accessibility of the infographic and sample ballot look-up application. He also discussed the new asset module through PollChief, which allows us to keep track of equipment and other assets in a more efficient manner. Nicholle Spencer, Public Information Coordinator, announced the infographic has been sent to federally qualified health centers, public schools, our internal media list, as well as being posted on our website and social media accounts. Anne Steffens is working on sending to private schools and a few other distribution lists. Chair Buchanan-McClure added that, due to our contract, the United Way of St. Louis provided their participating agencies with voter information across several jurisdictions.

Deputy Director Leicht announced details for the new wait-time application for in-person absentee voting and Election Day. One safety coordinator at each location will have a cell phone to update the number of people in line every 20-30 minutes. The application is live now on our website. We are ready to open our satellite locations for in-person absentee on Thursday, 10/22. Set-up of the locations will begin on Wednesday evening, 10/21. Finally, Deputy Director Leicht explained that we are publishing the statutorily-required publications for the election.

Director Fey announced that as of 10/19, we have received 92,614 ballots through the mail and dropped off at our office, and 21,071 voters have voted in-person absentee. This is a pretty dramatic increase compared to the November 2016 election. It's close to double what we had received at this point four years ago.

#### Old Business

The Commissioners asked the status of the notice of election/sample ballot card. Director Fey announced the files were sent to Mulligan Printing on 10/15 and are being printed and mailed out now. Chair Buchanan-McClure mentioned that in the future we should mail out these cards as soon as possible now that more and more voters are voting absentee.

There was nothing to discuss under New Business.

#### Financial/Budget

Director Stream explained the September financial reports. Chair Buchanan-McClure asked if any of the items we have requested COVID relief for have been denied. Director Stream answered that none of the items requested have been denied, but there are some that are

awaiting approval. Commissioner Potter asked if the CARES Act allows for salary and overtime reimbursement. Director Fey responded that the County has offered no opinion on this. Chair Buchanan-McClure asked staff to describe the reaction of the County Council to our budget presentation. Director Stream explained that there is only one difference between our budget and the County Executive's, which is funding the debt for our new voting equipment. The meeting was quick with no pressing questions.

There was nothing to discuss under Personnel.

There was nothing to discuss under Legal in the open meeting.

Recap:

- Revisit recap from September meeting
- Move infographic to the front of the website
- Receive media list from Nicholle Spencer
- Keep daily count of absentee ballots dropped off in-person

Secretary Foushee made a motion 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 Potter seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the votes were as follows: Chair Buchanan-McClure, aye; Secretary Foushee, aye; Commissioner Potter, aye; Commissioner Barnhart, aye.

The Commissioners have met in executive session and we have one thing to report:

We have discussed and are confident that all appropriate law enforcement and security at the national, state, and local levels have been collaborating and that all appropriate planning has occurred to provide a safe and orderly election from now through Election Day.

Secretary Foushee made a motion to adjourn and Commissioner Barnhart seconded the motion. The meeting was then adjourned.



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Sharon Buchanan-McClure, Chair



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Trudi McCollum Foushee, Secretary

Public Comments:

Sheena Hamilton

I applied to be a poll worker because of the American Bar Associations #PollWorkerEsq Initiative. <https://www.americanbar.org/news/abanews/aba-news-archives/2020/08/aba-joins-nass-and-nased-to-mobilize-lawyers-as-poll-workers-for/>. One of the main points that caught my attention was that: “[d]ue to the coronavirus pandemic and the fact that many experienced poll workers fall into high-risk health categories, states are predicting a shortage of workers to serve for the November 3 General Election.” Since St. Louis County is over staffed with poll workers and 8 out of 10 Americans who’ve suffered fatalities due to COVID-19 are individuals 65 or older, has the Board considered whether to notify poll workers 65 or older of the state of the staff population or offer those poll workers the opportunity to pass on this election. Of course, the Board should not discriminate in assignments based on age, and everyone who wants to serve should be allowed to do so. This question is only meant to address the provision of information and options to the most vulnerable among us.

Point of Information Added to the Minutes 11/17/2020:

At the beginning of the November election cycle, all active poll workers were contacted to obtain their availability to work the Presidential election, which is standard practice. Given safety concerns with the COVID-19 pandemic, the BOE sent workers additional information on the safety protocols that would be in place at each polling location. The workers could then make the decision to work or not based on their personal situations. Of the 1700 individuals who worked the August election, approximately 1/3 or 500 responded that they would not work in November. As a result, the BOE set a goal to hire 600 new election workers. In fact, the number of workers, 65 years of age and older, decreased from the August election to the November election. In August, workers 65 years or older represented 55% of total workers; November it was 39%. It is anticipated that many of the workers who chose not to work in November will work future elections.