

March, 2018 Board of Elections Meeting Observation Notes
March 19, 2018 at the County Office Complex

Attending: Sara Knotts, Director; Melissa Monroe, Deputy Director; Stuart Smith, Chairman, Randy Pelton and Boyd Williamson

Attending as Observers: Gail Bromley and Barbara Burrell, League of Women Voters and potential fourth member of Board, Jenna

Highlights:

Public Comments: During Public comments, Gail asked that when considering Early Voting locations and hours for the General Election this Fall, would the Board please consider publicizing their proposals for discussion. This way when public comments are made, they can specifically relate to plans that are being considered for a vote. She further asked that one of the plans please offer Sunday as an option since this proposal has wide support. This seemed to be positively received and Boyd lent his support for this idea.

Director's Report: The State finally has an approved Board now that the courts have spoken. However, there is one member who must be identified and that is either an Unaffiliated or Libertarian member. They also need a new name for the Board as this is a combined Board of Elections with the Board of Ethics. This new Board allows for decisions to be made at the state level, something that has been lacking for several months. Meanwhile, the courts did not comment on local county boards so it is assumed that each will be made up of equal members of Democrats and Republicans, thus necessitating another member to be appointed, or four members in all.

The new State Board will have to certify new election equipment so counties can move forward. The budget proposal prepared by Sara had a very uncertain amount dedicated to equipment, as what will be certified remains an unknown. Even if they certify what was looked at in the past, figures for costs are around two years old. The process for certification at the State and County levels is extensive. Might not be used until after December 2019.

Sara looked into security issues at polling places with State Board of Elections staff. The State staff commented that they did not encourage counties to use armed law enforcement at the polls as that could intimidate some voters. This discussion was interesting among our board members. Sara suggested that a sheriff's deputy be able to drive near the polling place to see if everything was okay from time to time.

Training for poll workers is going well.

Gail Bromley reporting.

