

Surry County Electoral Board Draft Meeting Minutes April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1:00 P.M.

Director of Elections Office, 168 Commerce Street, Dendron, Virginia 23883

Present Electoral Board Members, Lynita Mason, Ronald Howell, Cheryl Varner, Director of Elections, Sharna' White and members of the public.

Meeting was called to order by chair, Lynita. Agenda presented and adopted with minor changes made by motion of Cheryl 1. Adding approval of March 26 minutes (recorded by Ronald) and 2. Address letter written to Electoral Board from Mr. Robert Chandler received by email on April 8<sup>th</sup>. Motion 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ronald, motion carried unanimously.

-Approval of March 26<sup>th</sup> minutes. Call to question by Cheryl – were all officers of elections presented on March 26 of the democrat and republican chairs and any independents appointed. Board Members Lynita and Ronald responded in a “no”.

-Public Comment – Mr. Robert Chandler spoke about himself volunteering to serve as an officer of election as hearing additional officers were needed for the upcoming April 21 election. After several days of waiting, he called the director of elections about necessary training and was told he was not approved to serve as an officer of election. Mr. Chandler requested a written letter from the board to indicate why he was not appointed as if he felt he had the credentials and willingness to serve.

-Lynita stated a letter could be written to Mr. Chander.

-Cheryl spoke on proposed agenda. Making this statement and questions to board members, Lynita and Ronald. “ I call to question why was it necessary to call a meeting of the electoral board when you both were very much aware of the dates that I would be out of town attending the annual Virginal Electoral Board Association (VEBA) meeting, and training conference – a meeting event which you both were invited and greatly encouraged by myself to attend”. Seeking further clarification concerning an EB meeting knowingly called without me. I reached out to the (VEBA) chair in hopes that he could help me understand how this could be so. In response to my inquiry, I received this answer – legal yes, ethical no; the president of VEBA would do further research with the Va Department of Elections. During a question-and-answer session at the conference, I posed the situation again, from a microphone. The answer I was given was much the same. My situation was discussed with the Commissioner of the Department of Elections the response was as of follows. “While it was rude, divisive, unkind, showing lack of integrity, the action was not illegal” Cheryl then posed the question to the board members Lynita and Ronald again - why did they feel it was necessary to call a meeting while I was out of town. – call for discussion.

Continued, in response

Ronald said that it was brought to the board's attention that there were not enough officers of elections appointed and trained for the different precincts and to ensure this was handled in a timely manner a meeting needed to be called. (Note on February 6<sup>th</sup> there were 50 EO's appointed for 7 precincts).

Lynita questioned the reason for the meeting called April 9<sup>th</sup>.

Lynita also spoke on the urgency to have additional officers appointed and trained as to the reason the board members decided to proceed with the March 26<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Cheryl responded that she disagreed with the board members proceeding to have the March 26<sup>th</sup> meeting while she was out of town at the VEBA meeting stating that there were 50 officers of election appointed and all acceptance paperwork was due back by March 1<sup>st</sup>. A meeting was not mentioned or requested by the DOE until March 18<sup>th</sup>. Further, Cheryl saw no reason that the meeting could not wait until March 30<sup>th</sup> as she offered this date as an alternative time.

Cheryl gave a brief overview of the VEBA conference.

Cheryl brought up discussion concerning establishing a regular meeting monthly day/time in response to board members calling a meeting while she was out of town. This will also let the public know well in advance of our regular schedule.

Cheryl made a motion to establish regular EB meeting on the first Monday of the month at 10:00 a.m. beginning on May 4<sup>th</sup> unless that Monday falls on a holiday and if so the meeting will be held alternatively on the first Tuesday @10:00 am. Ronald 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion all in favor.

Lynita requested the motion be restated as to include a meeting would NOT be held if the board collaborated in advance so that if there was no new business resulting in the need to hold a monthly meeting.

Cheryl restated the motion: The regular EB will be meeting on the first Monday of the month at 10:00 am. beginning on May 4<sup>th</sup> unless that Monday falls on holiday and if so the meeting will be held on the first Tuesday at 10:00 a.m. .Additionally, however if the board collaboratively decided in advance that there would be no need to hold a meeting the meeting would be canceled. Ronald seconded the motion. A unanimous all in favor resulted.,

Cheryl requested a review of officers of election report from the DOE, inquired as to the training plan and requested an update of those who had accepted their oath of office and a preliminary review of precinct assignments. The DOE provided documents.

Cheryl questioned the DOE, the officer of election appointee list that a person that was appointed by the board (will be referred as number1) on February 6<sup>th</sup> was not included. Cheryl reminded the board that we did approve a list as a whole without naming each person. There was a disagreement between board members and the DEO about the complete list of appointees. The DOE did mention a new EB meeting could be held to appoint additional officers of election.

VEBA information notes mentioned by attendee Cheryl. 1. Reaching out to sheriff's department making sure as always, we would have rounding officers at precincts. 2. It was also recommended that the board meet on election day as a check in to any issues that may arise.

Canvas meeting times; following election day April 22, 10:00 a.m. Provisional meeting will be on Monday April 27<sup>th</sup> @10:00 a.m. The DOE will post this information on the website.

Discussion of expenses and budget information as provided by DOE. Ronald stated he had no issues on information provided by DOE. Cheryl chose several items off the information provided in question. Cheryl suggested the board come up with some sort of oversight plan on the budget and expenses of the office.

A letter from Robert Chandler was shared questioning the reason he was not appointed as officer of election. Chair Lynita restated that she would provide a response letter for Mr. Chandler

August 4<sup>th</sup> Primary: brief discussion of conflict with National Night Out. DOE had reached out to parks and recs to notify them that the building would be needed for the primary and that election "trumps" anything else.

Republican Party Chair Alan Bardwell in attendance asked for the opportunity to speak. The board agreed. Mr. Bardwell stated that person number 1, officer of election nominee, was not from an old list and she ( #1) was meant to be nominated to serve. Mr. Bardwell stated on February 9<sup>th</sup> he was contacted by email by DOE about 3 names that were inadvertently not included on the nomination list he submitted. He was informed that these three persons had normally served as republicans. Mr. Bardwell took exception to the word inadvertently used by the DOE to describe people that he had not included on his list of nominations which he provided to the DOE in January. Mr. Bardwell questioned why he was asked about these names on February 9<sup>th</sup> and no mention of the need to hold an EB meeting was made until March 18<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Bardwell also expressed that asking the DOE to

explain expenses of the office was not micromanaging (a word used by the DOE) but provided basic oversight of the electoral board members.

Cheryl questioned two other independents that were appointed in my absence by the board. Also noting that Mr. Chandler was on the nomination list but NOT appointed Mr. K. Bell and Ms. Joi Wooded were appointed as officers of election at the March 26<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Motion was made by Cheryl to adjourn, Ronald 2<sup>nd</sup> All in favor

Meeting was adjourned at 2:12 P.M.