

OAEO LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING CALL

MAY 5, 2020

Tim Ward, Co-chair, called the meeting to order shortly after 3:30 p.m.

A roll call was conducted.

Democrats

Shane Breckel – Clinton Co.

Penny Brooks – Athens Co.

Luke Burton – Licking co.

Eric Corbin – Butler Co.

Judith Craig- Fayette Co.

Diana Dulebohn – Auglaize Co.

Bethe A. Goldenfield – Warren Co.

Sarah Greathouse – Montgomery Co.

Joyce Kale-Pesta – Mahoning Co.

Sally Krisel – Hamilton Co.

Ed Leonard – Franklin Co.

Ross McDonald – Lake Co.

Carol Perry – Athens Co.

Bill Rich – Summit Co.

Brett Riffle – Fairfield Co.

LaVera Scott – Lucas Co. **Co-Chair**

Brian Sleeth – Warren Co.

John Welker – Medina Co.

Michelle Wilcox - Auglaize Co.

Republicans

Cecilia Blevins – Huron Co.

Chris Burnett – Galia Co.

Terry Burton – Wood Co.

Kathi Creed – Trumbull Co.

Jane Hanley – Fairfield Co.

Charlie Hardman – Wayne Co.

Karla Herron – Delaware Co.

Jan Kelly – Montgomery Co.

Mark Munroe – Mahoning Co.

A.J. Nowacyk – Williams Co.

Carla Patton – Franklin Co.

Kirsten Ross – Coshocton Co.

Shantiel Soeder – Cuyahoga Co.

Olga Thomas – Athens Co.

Tim Ward – Madison Co. **Co-Chair**

Absent: Deb Snedden – Mercer Co. **Recording Secretary**, Ron Knight – Trumbull Co., Tonya Wichman – Defiance Co., Kay Wick – Montgomery Co.

A quorum was present.

Merle Madrid and Grant Shafer were on the call from the Ohio Secretary of State's office.

There were no additions or corrections to the minutes of the March 24, 2020, meeting, which had been previously sent to all members of the committee. The minutes were accepted by voice vote on a motion by A. J. Nowaczyk and a second by Carla Patton.

The Chairs then asked Aaron to lead the discussion of the Agenda items. He suggested emphasis on lessons learned from the primary election and discussion/decisions as to each item we want to put forth/support as set out in the agenda.

With regard to Agenda item III. Review of Possible COVID-19 Response Items, Tim and Lavera then began the discussion of in-person absentee voting and multiple early vote locations.

LaVera posed the question as to whether each county decides or the state suggests or mandates the use of multiple locations for early in-person voting.

Tony Perlatti suggested that the legislators, in order to make early vote centers work, need to take into consideration that the vote centers must be secure, but that for functionality, the use of our technology--the electronic poll books--is essential.

Counties need flexibility on what works for their county. Geography is as important as the number of voters

Sarah Greathouse asked whether we believe that there will be in-person voting in November, 2020.

LaVera stated that the Secretary of State's office needed to address Sarah's question.

Merle Madrid then stated, that, "Yes, expect in-person voting in November, we want to see it happen." We want to make our system better and make the necessary steps a reality in the legislature to do it.

LaVera noted that the biggest challenge in multiple early voting locations is the need for coordination between counties.

There was a consensus of the committee that multiple early vote locations is a good longterm goal, but other agenda items are more beneficial immediately.

Penny Brooks stated that her preference would be an all by mail election for November.

LaVera stressed that we need to focus on November, 2020, now. The only way we could do the primary was by putting our staffs at risk. We also had issues where a voter put an application in the mail on time, but didn't get a ballot on time.

Merle stated that the Secretary of State's office recognized the strain that the counties experienced. He said that they know the counties is who got everything done, know how awful the slowness of mail and the confusion of the court case was. He said as he said to Michelle, the Catch 22 is that elections officials pull off whatever they're asked to do. In six months we have to do everything we can to make it possible for everyone to do vote by mail in November and also make in-person available.

Moving to Agenda item b. In-person voting, all members on the call were in agreement to support allowing 17 year-old juniors to be poll workers and to support consolidating polling locations including increasing the number of voters per precinct and eliminating the DRE to voter ratio in the statute.

In considering Agenda item c. Mail-in voting, all members on the call agreed on the importance of preparing all electors to take advantage of vote by mail for November, 2020, support the enactment of SB 191 online absentee requests, support mailing ballot requests and requested ballots for all primary and general elections postage prepaid, and support moving the Saturday noon request absentee deadline to noon the Tuesday before the election, agreeing that the

Saturday noon deadline is impractical and sets the voter up for disappointment. Prepaid postage and a reasonable deadline are key factors.

Joyce Kale-Pesta posed the question as to where the money was going to come from to cover the additional expected costs. Merle, from the Secretary of State's office, advised that he can speak to what we have in our CARES and HAVA dollars this year, not for future years.

In considering Agenda item, b. ii. Allow poll workers to leave county (to work in another county), the consensus was that this is not a priority at this time.

Ed Leonard requested that the committee consider the issue of lifting the disqualifier for convicted felons to be poll workers after a cap of time, suggesting ten years on a felony conviction to lift the disqualifier. Tim Ward stated that some felonies should not be acceptable, and that the hiring decision should be left to the board. The consensus of the committee is to support allowing ex-felons who have served their sentence and have not had a conviction in the last ten years to serve as poll workers.

In addressing Agenda item c. Mail-in Voting, the committee agreed upon and supports, i. sending absentee ballot requests and requested ballots postage prepaid for all primary and general elections, ii. moving Saturday noon request absentee deadline to noon the Tuesday before the election, and iii. Enacting SB191, online absentee request.

As to item iv. Funding capital expenses like mail sorters, openers, etc., Michelle Wilcox advised that we are in arrears in Ohio 66 to 70 million dollars from the March Primary and need dollars now so we are advocating for federal funds to cover these expenses. We need to tell them that we need money for these capital expenses, that we need funding. We need to get dollar amounts to Michelle to get the federal funding. They need to hear from us what we need if we have an all mail election in November. Tim Ward suggested a survey to gather the information from each county. Michelle will draft the survey and get the information to Merle and Mandy at the Secretary of State's office.

Tony Perlatti brought up greater flexibility with multiple drop off boxes. Lavera stated that she had gotten permission in writing from the Secretary of State's office to do this in this primary "due to nature of the election." Merle said he would have the Secretary of State's attorneys look at this issue.

In considering Agenda item d. Misc. Allowing ten, not 7 days for provisional curing, the consensus of the committee is 7 business days.

In considering IV. Possible August 2020 special election provisions

- Eliminate
- Or full chargebacks, all mail special

The consensus of the committee was to work through, consider, work towards eliminating later.

Merle from the Secretary of State's office thanked the Committee and Chairs for their work.

Penny Brooks moved to adjourn the meeting.