

Ohio Association of Election Officials – Leadership Retreat - March 25th, 2021

The Retreat was held at the Hyatt Columbus, Ohio

Trustee's and Officer's present were: Aaron Ockerman, Lisa Welch, President, Brian Sleeth, 1st Vice-President, Sherry Poland, 2nd Vice-President, Michelle Wilcox-Past-President, Brian Mead, Treasurer, Joyce Kale-Pesta, Secretary and Bronwen Evener, OAEO Conference Chair. Ann Reno-Bd. Member, Clinton Co, Cheryl Browning-Director-Jackson Co., Phil Long-Bd. Member-Mercer Co., Lynn Mintchell-Bd. Member-Champaign Co, Tony Perlatti-Director-Cuyahoga Co, Brandon Wobler-Bd. Member-Paulding Co., Bill Rich-Bd.-Member-Summit Co., Sarah Greathouse-Deputy Director-Montgomery Co.. Meredith Bodey-Director-Champaign Co, Julie Leathers Stahl-Director-Wayne Co., Brian Mead-Deputy Director-Licking Co., Ed Ryder-Bd. Member-Geauga Co., Ranae Lentz-Bd. Member-Logan Co., Faith Lyons-Director-Portage Co, David Karmol-Bd. Member-Lucas Co.,

Michelle Wilcox opened the retreat with a welcome and a thank you to the OAEO Officers, Trustee's and Legislative Committee Members for their leadership, dedication and hard work during the 2020 Presidential Election. She outlined the challenges faced during the COVID Epidemic as well as the unexpected issues faced by all Boards of Elections in Ohio.

Aaron Ockerman informed those present that Jody O'Brien, was retiring as the Association Treasurer and Beth Ann Snyder, Secretary were resigning their positions with the OAEO. Aaron extended a sincere thank you to them for their service and all agreed they would be hard to replace. They were made lifetime members of the OAEO.

Aaron introduced Brian Mead as the Association Treasurer and Joyce Kale-Pesta, Secretary and thanked Bronwen Evener for her continued service as the Convention Coordinator.

President Lisa Welch expressed her goals during her tenure as President. Voter Education is a high priority on her agenda which includes creating consistent talking points all boards can use for Educating the Public. She would like to see the role of the Association rallying in support of Boards and more funding in the State Budget for Voter Education. She would like to create support for a healing process with the electorate to restore confidence in voters.

Vice-President Brian Sleeth also commented on the challenges of the Primary Election and the issues caused by the virus, the loss of poll workers and the cancellation of the election. He stated that creating a good working relationship with the media the past year was important for notifying the voters of the changes to the voting process. He would be in favor of the OAEO presenting ideas or actual PSA's to Boards for use as educational tools.

Aaron Ockerman opened the floor for Discussion.

Topics were:

Kids Voting: Serving as OAEO's representatives on the organization, Phil Long gave an update to the trustees on the formation and activities of Kids Voting Ohio.

On-line absentee request: The group was in favor of the legislation since voter registration is on line and there has been very few issues with the method used.

Social Media: Discussion should the OAEO provide a Facebook and Twitter Page for all Boards to use. Many would like to see the Secretary of State provide better training on line. Create a sharepoint web page for all boards to collaborate with each other on election topics on a secure site. Many liked the Best Practices Boards used in prior years to share information.

Poll Worker Recruitment: There was discussion on the lack of poll workers in the Primary Election but an

overflow in some counties in the General. The biggest problem seemed to be when a voter visited the SOS site they filled out the PW Recruitment form without understanding what it was actually for.

US Mail: Many counties had serious problems with printing vendors and mail delivery in general. Ballots that went to Cleveland and Detroit seemed to have the worst delivery time. Lack of Postal staff and equipment seemed to be the consensus but no one really knew what the answer would be to solve the postal issue.

Vendors: One vendor who was contracted to do several counties was not able to keep up with the demand of absentee ballot request. This led to lots of delays and dissatisfied voters.

Absentee Ballot Drop Boxes: Active discussion on need for one or more than one. Smaller counties raised issues on staffing and security. Some larger counties saw a greater need for them.

Legislators: Ideas for State Legislators to have a better understanding of how Boards operate and the financial needs they have each election. Ideas – 1. Invite Legislators to be poll workers on election day. 2. Build a bridge with your legislators – invite them into the office often. 3. Call them often to discuss proposed election legislation. 4. Create an open house at the Board for the voters and the legislators. 5. Have a Lobby Day at the state capitol for the OAEO members and the legislators. This has been done some years ago.

Aaron Ockerman closed the 1st day of the retreat by thanking everyone for their participation, opinions, ideas and the success of the trustee retreat. He spoke briefly on the agenda for the legislative committee the next day and hoped everyone was saying to attend.

Meeting adjourned 6:10 PM.

Respectively submitted by,
Joyce Kale-Pesta, Secretary

Approved: _____