

**OAEO
Legislative Committee Meeting Minutes
February 11, 2021**

Executive Director, Aaron Ockerman welcomed everyone on the call.

Co Chair, LaVera Scott called the meeting to order.

Secretary Deb Sneddon conducted a roll call vote. A quorum was present. An attendance list is attached.

LaVera Scott presented the minutes from the last meeting for additions or corrections. Hearing none, Carla Patton moved to approve the minutes and Kirsten Ross seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken; all were in favor, motion passed.

Hearing no old business in need of action, Aaron opened the floor to discuss any items that may come before the association for consideration. Mark Munroe opened the discussion on **curbside voting** and the wish for procedural guidance and consistency. Clarity in the law on who was eligible and direction from the SOS with specifics could have prevented some of the chaos that happened in 2020. Ross McDonald reminded everyone that the Governor and the Secretary of State were openly promoting curbside voting without any restrictions. Julie Leathers-Stahl added that people thought they could skip the line and voters became upset when they were asked to use a line marker. Although we served a lot of voters with curbside voting, the differences on the EOM and the special pandemic rules, which did not allow us to ask a reason why a voter wished to vote curbside, Sarah Greathouse added her request for procedure clarification in order to apply the rules equally and equitably. She also hoped to apply the same logic to **PPE** usage in the polling locations (we were required to offer masks but not require masks). She felt it was not fair to ask this of people who were making \$8/hr. Aaron asked for ideas of how we would like to see the guidance structured.

Bill Rich added that he thought the SOS should give guidance on things related to a pandemic. Eric Corbin asked for a spelling out of who has discretion on the rules and staff being able to back those statements with something in writing.

AJ Nowaczyk added that some counties had reserved parking spots for curbside voters and did allow people to jump the line.

Judy Craig reminded the group that the chaos around curbside voting happened during a pandemic, was an anomaly, and chances are that we would not need to amend the EOM.

Sarah Greathouse brought up the different rules between counties as well as the guidance on **drop boxes** and using this discussion as a springboard to ask for additional guidance from the SOS when more clarification is needed.

LaVera was not as optimistic that the pandemic would be over and agreed that every county was doing things differently. She would like more clarification on drop boxes and allowing counties to have discretion on the number of drop boxes.

AJ added that the pandemic has changed how people vote.

Bill Rich agreed and said that he did not think the SOS needed to have permission from the legislators and he hoped for flexibility in the placement of the drop boxes and the number desired. Melanie Gliders added that one seemed reasonable in her county, but she welcomed clarification from the SOS. Concerns about security of the boxes and small counties not having enough staff to retrieve the contents, as well as requirements for ballot security were discussed.

Carla Patton stated that Franklin County would welcome a second location for a drop box because of the distance a voter needed to travel and the congestion at the early vote center.

LaVera added that she would like to see the number of boxes based on something such as registered voters and not leaving the decision to the local boards. Co-chair Terry Burton added his concerns about what we do with drop boxes when it is not a Presidential Election and how to

utilize them over the four year period. Bryce Miner stated concerns about the security footage and who would have access to the video and the evidence if something were to occur. Bill Rich added that he would like to see Title 35 explicitly state that multiple boxes were not prohibited and leave it to the SOS to work out the details addressing the above concerns. Aaron agreed that the solution would allow for flexibility in evolving situations. Tim Burton suggested a work group and Aaron replied that there are strong feelings on both sides of the aisle and perhaps continuing the conversation in a work group or an email chain and bringing the ideas back to the committee would be doable.

Ross McDonald brought up **vacancies in party offices** and having to wait two years to put the vacancy on the ballot. Bill Rich added that it would force a county wide election in an odd year. Beth Goldenfield added that there is always a countywide election in November and that a vacancy could be filled at that election. Karla Herron added that the county could become home rule and have elections whenever they wanted. The possibility of having a primary was brought up by Kathy Meyer. Terry Burton added that there is an expectation in the public of who is on the ballot in even and odd years. Ross added that although we understand this, it is confusing for voters.

Gail Gairbrant brought up the **last day to request an absentee** being on the Saturday before the election. Terry Burton reminded the committee that we have talked about this before and previously agreed ten to fourteen days is too long, and the committee had agreed that seven days seems reasonable.

Aaron brought up possible priorities for legislation to put forward that would include **online applications and 17 year old poll workers**. LaVera brought up the past conversations on the two factor authentication required. Deb Sneddon reminded everyone of the five page applications received last year and hoped that anything put forward would not be rushed. Aaron suggested a delayed effective date. LaVera asked specifically if anyone objected to the idea of online absentee requests. Hearing none, the conversation moved to the 17 year old workers. Carla Patton is a parent of a junior who was unable to work and she thinks we should be encouraging more students to work the polls. Luke Burton agreed, having had his start as a 17 year old worker, he didn't think what grade you are in should matter. Mark Munroe asked about how the party selection of the youth at the booth was decided. A few counties replied that they are used as non-party affiliated workers.

Cheryl Browning asked **if party affiliation could follow you to a county when you move**. LaVera added that this is another area that voters need education and that turnout was lower for the March 2020 primary and the issues that it may cause for the future. Sarah Greathouse added that this was also an issue after the 2018 Primary and the Central Committee members who voted in the other party primary had to be removed. LaVera brought up the possible shift in party affiliation after ballots were ordered and having a shortage of Election Day ballots.

Aaron then brought up the items from previous discussions. The first one was the requirements being inconsistent on **bidding for printer contracts**. The requirements for posting bonds are antiquated. Having to post performance bonds and bid bonds and the amount of those bonds is inconsistent with other public bidding and inflates the costs. The requirement of being in state is driving up the cost. The associated services that come with ballot printing have evolved. Mark Munroe added that anything that could increase competition and lower price would be welcome. There was no objection.

The Board of Voting examiners in **SB14** would require voter registration system vendors to be certified. Consideration of **adding ballot printer vendors** to this process as they are also

transferring voter data files was brought up. Deb Sneddon added she thought it would be a positive solution to purchasing printers or other hardware that was not supported by the manufacturer. Bill Rich added that he understands the ideas of the concept and although we don't know the costs involved with certifying a system that he thought that perhaps those costs would be passed on to Boards of Elections without solving the problem those counties had with delays. He hesitated to offer support for the matter. Aaron will gather information and language from other states and share it with the committee.

The process of registration systems being certified was discussed, with the end goal of having standards for security for the data.

LaVera reminded the committee of the guidelines that were made in the EOM for ballot print vendors.

Aaron asked if there was any interest in a **statutory requirement for Logic and Accuracy testing**. Ross McDonald added that each vendor had guidelines and testing has been developed in house and questioned if we needed statutory guidance. Carla Patton thought that perhaps there should be a minimum requirement but not having a prescription defining exactly how testing should be done. Bill Rich questioned why we need this if it is already required. It was agreed that it should not be counterproductive.

The next item discussed was **multiple voter centers** and Aaron wanted to know if anyone's thoughts on the matter had changed based on the 2020 elections. No one objected to making that part of our proposal.

Lastly, **codifying the EAP** was brought up. The timing and frequency for submitting the plans could be negotiated as well as the timing for updates. Kathy Meyer added that these plans are benchmarks for every election and every procedure is laid out and there is no need to change the plan based on the size of the election.

Aaron apologized for taking so much time and turned it over to Terry and LaVera who agreed that we, as a committee had reached our goal, a consensus for the upcoming year. Terry encouraged everyone to contact Aaron or a committee member with any ideas for future consideration. Terry is also gathering information on **HR 1** and if anyone had comments to add on how this bill will affect elections in Ohio to contact him directly.

AJ Nowaczyk moved to adjourn the meeting. Ross McDonald seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted by,
Deb Sneddon, Secretary

Approved: _____