

Election Process Review Committee
Meeting Minutes
Monday, December 22, 2014

The regular meeting of the Election Process Review Committee Meeting held on December 15, 2014 at 5 pm in the 2nd floor Conference Room, Independence Hall, 725 Old Post Road, Fairfield, Connecticut 06824.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Catherine Albin - Chairperson, Ron Pine – Vice Chairperson,

ABSENT: Bryan Cafferelli, James Quinn, Registrar Roger Autuori

PRESENT:

Registrar Matthew Waggner, Holly Lanese

I. Call to order

Mrs. Albin opened the meeting at 5:08 pm. Mr. Quinn was unable to make the meeting and Mr. Cafferelli was stuck in traffic.

Mr. Pine led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Albin stated sine there was not a quorum there will be no votes and we will review the previous meeting minutes at the next meeting. Mrs. Albin stated in retrospect we should have started the meetings in January.

II. Discuss and Review Information

Mr. Pine listed the people who provided information to review: Sharon Brazowski, MR. Autuori, Mr. Waggner, Holly Lanese, Steve Elworthy – Republican Deputy Registrar of Voters, Sharmaine Pulley – Democrat Deputy Registrar of Voters, and a couple of complaints from constituents.

Mrs. Albin stated we will do a better job looking at the information after the holidays.

Mr. Pine stated from looking through all the material is was a surprise that Dwight School opened at 6:10 am and Osborn Hill School opened at 6:15 am. Holland Hill School opened on time at 6 am. It is surprise that the polls were not opened, which may have left some commuters unable to vote.

Mr. Waggner stated that the poll workers did not communicate to the Registrars that those locations were not open on time.

Mr. Pine read information from Sharon Brazowski Assistant Registrar that polls opened at 6:10pm at Dwight School. Louis Cedeno at Sherman School did not show up and sent text message at 6:15 he was ill. Some people were upset that polls were not opening for 15 min, Where you aware?

Mr. Waggner, stated that Mr. Cedeno did not call and once they found out they were able to get someone to fill in. With 110 employees, one may call out sick. The one person who called out was replaced. One District had a problem with the tabulator. There are a number of questions as to why. Was it a problem casting votes, entering votes into machine, or did not start entering until all signatures were on the 0 tape? If the machine was not ready the votes are put in the axillary bin and entered later in the day.

Mrs. Albin asked what has happened in past years, in general what is your impression on the previous elections. I would say that hearing from the districts the polls opened late and that there are a lot of people in the middle, were the doors open or were the doors shut, were the polls opened but a problem with handing out ballots or feeding into reader. If polls open at 6:10 am and 6:15 am what does that mean? Where the doors open or people outside doors closed?

Mr. Pine ask if the doors were not opened are the school opened with people standing outside the gym?

Mr. Waggner stated the campaign notifies them whenever there is a problem they would let us know. There were two districts voting campaigns call and state parties call. There was a problem with District 134 were they were notified quickly and repeatedly. Every other problem they heard early and often.

Mr. Pine we have to find out from the reports if the locations were open.

Holly Lanese stated there is no reason the polls should not be open.

Mr. Pine stated from the information the polls opened up late.

Mr. Waggner stated, every year something breaks before 6am Ludlow High had both tabulators break on year. Prior to the polls opening he drove around with spare memory cards. Every year something requires them to be out before 6 am. Roger Sherman School moderator did not come and poll workers did not have keys, the Registrars had to go unlock the equipment. Every year something happens.

Mr. Pine wants to find out if there are problems that can be corrected from the registrars, polls opening, and Nancy Vanclief.

Holly Lanese stated that we live the voting daily. The poll workers help one to two times a year. They teach them over and over, this year everyone had two or three mini polling places, it takes a while for them to understand the process.

Mrs. Albin asked with the new districts in the next election will it be alleviated. For 2016, we should be working to the goal to smooth out the kinks.

Holly Lanese stated that it takes time to think through for two to three mini polling places. We can't assume everyone one can remember from previous years.

Mrs. Albin asked do you have a running list of repeat poll workers.

Holly Lanese stated the number of people who work range from the younger to the older population. Fortunately, people give up a lot of time of their day, it is best to make it simple because it is a big day. The traffic directors notify voters of the three lines for each district for each assembly.

Mr. Waggner stated the assistant registrars are on hand and can step in to fill in, and are empowered to hire anyone they like to do the jobs. The moderator is the only one that has to be pre-certified. They can draft voters to help work the polls, for example they can say to a voter in line we are short a checker... can you work. With the structure changes the moderators are supreme in the pooling place, they can recruit, get registrars to help and get a backup workers.

Mr. Pine stated that we will check into the polls that open late. Look into the wrong ballots, Steve Elworthy said there were the wrong ballots for district 133, the moderator in district 134 could not find the district 132 ballots he walked over to the bin to show her the correct ballot.

Holly Lanese stated that we tell them to check the ballots and double check the ballots.

Mr. Pine asked if they training on different colored ballots.

Mr. Waggner stated that they reviewed the ballots and two lines with the districts. For McKinley School rather than have a separate line for 10 to 15 voters, they had different colored ballot. The color ballot was coordinated with the list. If voters name was on the beige list they would get the beige ballot.

Mrs. Albin asked why it did not happen at other locations and does the state allow colored ballots?

Mr. Waggner said the State requires ballots to be white. They have to light enough to read the text but we can ask them to do color ballots.

Mr. Albin asked if there is an additional expense.

Mr. Waggner stated that we get a volume discount and there is not a lot of cost difference. For districts that are split it may cost a little more.

Mr. Wagner stated that in 2012 when they had splits it worked and they did not have any complains. We could say this poll worker gave wrong ballot; we will focus on training on districts and make that certain poll workers absorb that lesson, and we could emphasize it more. We only have the people for one hour of training. We could say we will train 5 hours, strategically we decide the most information they need to get. You can train every poll worker for everyone's job. We should emphasized more, on Election Day that some people were handed the wrong ballot. When it was brought to attention it was resolved quickly.

Mrs. Albin asked if we are going to have Steve Elworthy

Mrs. Albin will contact Mr. Autouri to attend our next meeting and asked if Holly Lanese would be able to come again.

Holly Lanese stated that she would be happy to help.

Mr. Pine stated that my feeling is we can narrow this down if the problems were with the polls opening, wrong ballots or training.

Mr. Waggner stated the state requires to pay worker for training, by job.

Holly Lanese recommended getting younger voters involved.

Mrs. Albin, suggested we try to get the students from the high schools in the AP government classes.

Mr. Pine stated our charge is to make sure there are no issues with the voting process.

Mr. Waggner stated the wrong distribution of ballots we have to address with training. With the new 10 districts there should only be 3 splits and enough equipment.

Mrs. Albin asked if we did not have enough equipment for this past election.

Mr. Waggner stated that our election budget is one tenth of other towns. We did not have enough equipment for the last elections. IF the RTM is successful in reducing the splits, there would be enough equipment. There would only be one split with 250 voters, who would vote in another room. He stated it would be the opportunity for best practice.

Mrs. Albin stated that we are still in the fact finding phase.

Mr. Waggner stated he would follow up with an email on which polls were open or not open at 6 am. Mrs. Albin will share the information on the subject of the two polls not opened with Mr. Waggner, Mr. Autouri, and Holly Lanese.

Mr. Pine stated that there were some complaints to the State Election Enforcement Commission (SEEC). He would call the SEEC to check and see if they received any other complaints from Fairfield.

Mr. Waggner stated a machine was not dialing and a voter, Kevin Ahern, called the SEEC and it was put on his radar. He was gratified there was only a single complaint from a voter that was handled.

Mr. Pine stated the recap of issues thus far were polls opening up late, voters being given wrong ballots, no show of election workers, election workers that were not properly trained or incompetent, defective equipment, and complaints received by the SEEC.

Mrs. Albin stated that we will pick this up in January.

III. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 5:49 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Andrea Flynn
Recording Secretary