



Lynchburg Electoral Board

825 Kemper Street, Lynchburg, Virginia 24501

Special Meeting Minutes

December 9, 2022, 3:00 PM

GLTC Conference Room, 800 Kemper Street, Lynchburg, VA

ATTENDANCE

Board Members: David B. Neumeyer, Chair
Carolyn Sherayko, Vice Chair
Betty Gibbs, Secretary

Registrar's Office: Christine Gibbons, General Registrar; Juleigh Brown, Assistant Registrar;
Kim Conner, Deputy Registrar

Guests: Veronica Bratton (Lynchburg Republican Committee Chair); Curt Diemer; Jeff Rosner (Lynchburg Democratic Committee Authorized Rep); Steve Troxel

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Neumeyer at 3:02 PM.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

This special meeting was called to discuss the use of pages during the November election. Two additional items were added to the agenda: payments for Officer of Election training and security enhancement at one precinct. The agenda for the meeting was approved. (A printed agenda was not provided.)

BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Pages Assigned to Liberty University Precinct. During public comments at the regular Board meeting on December 1, Andrew Glover presented his observations on Election Day (November 8). He encountered high school students who arrived at the Sandusky precinct to perform the duties of pages. They told Mr. Glover that they were told there were no page positions inside the precinct; they went outside and began handing out Democratic party sample ballots. Mr. Glover reported that the students stated that they had coordinated their activities with their AP government teacher.

Later, on Election Day, Veronica Bratton was informed that several high school students had shown up at the Liberty University precinct as part of a page program. Referring to §24.2-604.3, Mrs. Bratton asked whether the pages had been trained and signed oaths as the Code requires. In contrast, she noted that several Republican Election Officer candidates were disqualified from serving on Election Day because they had not received training. Additionally, she questioned the unlimited access these students were allowed in the precinct while Authorized Representatives (poll watchers) were assigned to areas which allowed limited audible and visual access to pollbook check-ins and other precinct activities.

Chairman Neumeyer asked Deputy Registrar Conner about the use of pages and their training. She stated that the students were not trained because the precinct Chief was to do the training. Mrs. Conner stated that in the past pages had been trained on one of the Saturdays preceding an election.

On October 21, the Liberty University precinct Chief, Curt Diemer, expressed his concerns about Election Day staffing in an email to Registrar Gibbons, Deputy Registrar Connor, and Assistant Registrar Juleigh Brown (who was assigned to be an Assistant Chief in the Liberty precinct). The week before the election, Chief Diemer was emailed the names and phone numbers of students who had signed up to be pages. He prepared a brief email for them, stating what would be expected and what would be forbidden during their volunteer shifts. On Election Day, he gave verbal instructions and entrusted supervision of the pages to Angie Diemer. He was unaware of an oath the pages were to sign. He expressed appreciation for their help and initiative throughout the day. He subsequently thanked the teacher for offering such capable students. Mr. Diemer questioned the seeming contradiction between the prohibition of the use of election volunteers yet the authorization of pages. Registrar Gibbons referred to an email from ELECT, clarifying that the page program is a government program, therefore, exempt from the volunteer prohibition. Mr. Diemer suggested that pages need to be included in the Code list of those permitted in the polling places because the Code currently prohibits private individuals as volunteers.

Deputy Registrar Conner stated that pages are not used during every election, only when high turnout is expected and their services are needed. Pages under the age of 18 need parental permission to work, but all pages this year were 18. Registrar Gibbons stated that the supervision of the page program is delegated entirely to Mrs. Conner.

Secretary Gibbs questioned why the Board was unaware of the use of pages when the Code states multiple times that the Board (or Registrar) are responsible for recruiting, assigning, and training pages. Vice Chair Sherayko stated that previous Electoral Boards had delegated the responsibility to the General Registrar. She added that the use of the word “program” in the Code implies a more formal arrangement than has been practiced in Lynchburg. Chairman Neumeyer stated that Lynchburg needs a formal page program policy drafted by the registrar and deputy and approved by the Electoral Board. Vice Chair Sherayko and Secretary Gibbs agreed.

2. Heritage Methodist Church. The security assessment by Jamie Finney (US Homeland Security) suggested the use of bollards outside the entrance to the voting precinct located there (to protect voters in line outside of the precinct as well as those inside the window-lined wall of the room where the precinct is located). Mr. Finney informed the Board of the availability of funding grants available to non-profits for security enhancement projects. Chairman Neumeyer used talking points provided by Steve Troxel to draft a letter to Heritage Methodist Church thanking them for serving as a precinct and informing them of the opportunity for improving security during elections as well as for the daycare facility on the premises. Grant applications are due early next Spring. Vice Chair Sherayko suggested that other non-profit voting locations be offered similar information.

3. Payment for Election Officer Training. The custom for past elections has been to pay Lynchburg election officers to attend training prior to the election, if funds were available. This year, training on the new electronic pollbooks began in the Spring and was required in addition to routine pre-election training. Election officers were paid \$25 for attending the earlier pollbook training, however, a veteran Lynchburg Election Officer contacted Secretary Gibbs asking why he was not paid for training this year. When he called the Registrar's office, Deputy Registrar Kim Conner told him there were no funds because additional parttime staff had been hired for early in-person voting.

Previous Electoral Boards had not adopted a policy regarding payment for attending training although the current Board agreed that it encourages attendance. After some discussion, Vice Chair Sherayko moved that Election Officers be paid \$25 for each in-person training they attended. Seconded by Secretary Gibbs, the motion was unanimously approved.

A second motion was made by Vice Chair Sherayko clarifying that the \$25 payments would be for training received after July 1, 2022. Seconded by Secretary Gibbs, the motion was unanimously approved. Registrar Gibbons voiced her intention to amend her budget request for 2023-2024 to include training funds.

With all three agenda items addressed, the meeting was adjourned at 4:06 PM.

Next Regular Meeting: Thursday, January 5, 2023, 4 PM, in the GLTC conference room.

Respectfully submitted,

Betty Gibbs, Secretary
Electoral Board
City of Lynchburg