

Election Board Meeting
August 2, 2023

The Monroe County Board of Elections held a meeting on August 2, 2023 in the Commissioners' Public Meeting Room at the Monroe County Administration Center with the following present: Chairperson John R. Moyer, Board member Lauren Peterson, Board member Peter Gardner, Solicitor John Dunn, Director of Voter Registration Sara May-Silfee, Chief Clerk, Greg Christine and public attendees.

Chairperson Moyer called the meeting to order at 10:32 a.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Motion by Board member Gardner, seconded by Board member Peterson to approve the minutes of the Election Board meeting held on June 7, 2023. Motion carried.

Mrs. May-Silfee stated that she was contacted by the Barrett Township Supervisors informing her that the Barrett Township Building, which had been the polling location for the Barrett 1 precinct, will not be available for the November 7, 2023 Municipal Election due to them selling the building. The supervisors have purchased the former Barrett Elementary Center, which was renamed the Barrett Administrative and Recreation Complex. The Barrett Township Supervisors proposed to move the Barrett 1 polling place to the gymnasium at the Barrett Administrative and Recreation Complex. Mrs. May-Silfee also stated that the Mountainhome United Methodist Church, which has been serving as the Barrett 2 polling place, intended to move the polling location to another room, which would be smaller. The Barrett Township Supervisors proposed to move the Barrett 2 polling location to the Barrett Administrative and Recreation Complex gymnasium, which is large enough to handle both Barrett 1 and Barrett 2 polling places. Notices will be mailed to all registered voters in Barrett Township informing them of their new polling place location. Notices will also be posted at the former polling locations informing voters of the new polling location.

Motion by Board member Gardner, seconded by Board member Peterson to approve moving Barrett 1 and Barrett 2 polling locations to the Barrett Administrative and Recreation Complex. Motion carried.

Mrs. May-Silfee stated that she is ready to go to the court to have the Tunkhannock polling location split into 2 polling locations. One would stay at the Tunkhannock Township Municipal Building and the other would move to the Tunkhannock Township Fire Company.

Mrs. May-Silfee also stated that she will be meeting with Father Gregory Reichlen from the Church of Saint John's on Thursday, August 31, 2023 regarding using their facility for an additional polling location for Middle Smithfield West. She also stated that she will be splitting Middle Smithfield East and Middle Smithfield West polling locations. There would then be 4 polling locations for Middle Smithfield, which would be located at the Middle Smithfield Community Center, the Middle Smithfield Presbyterian Church, the Middle Smithfield Township Municipal Building and the Church of Saint John's. Chairperson Moyer stated that there have been discussions regarding splitting Middle Smithfield over the years. The new polling locations would take effect in 2024.

Mrs. May-Silfee stated that she would like to split the Polk Township polling location, but is having difficulty finding suitable space. She has reached out to the Pleasant Valley School District but she has not received a call back. The Polk Elementary school is the only facility in Polk Township but it's not handicap accessible at this time.

Chairman Moyer asked Mrs. May-Silfee if she has spoken with Mr. Dunn regarding the possibility of combining the Stroudsburg Borough polling places. Mrs. May-Silfee stated that Stroudsburg Borough would need to discontinue the ward system for that to happen. There was a discussion regarding the process of splitting polling places.

Mrs. May-Silfee stated that the Pennsylvania Senate is considering moving up the April 23, 2024 Primary Election to March 19th, April 2, April 9th or April 16th because the current date conflicts with Passover. She sent a letter to the Monroe County State Representatives and the Monroe County State Senator outlining her concerns with changing the date of the 2024 Primary. She noted the further complication that, if the date were advanced to March 19th candidates would need to circulate their nominating petitions over the Christmas holiday and there would also be a conflict with existing Election Code provisions.

During public comment Theresa Pesce stated that there are no video recorded Election Board, meeting tapes or written Election Board minutes available on the county website. She asked the Election Board if the monthly meetings could be video recorded like the County Commissioners meetings. Ms. Pesce stated that she is aware that the audio recordings of the meeting are made. She requested to have the meeting tapes and meeting minutes posted on the county website, but she would prefer a video recording and meeting minutes posted on the county website.

Board member Gardner asked Chairperson Moyer if other monthly meetings besides the County Commissioner meetings are recorded and posted on the county website. Chairperson Moyer stated that the County Commissioner meetings are the only meetings recorded and posted. Mr. Dunn stated that this would need to be discussed with the County IT Department and, if the Election Board meetings are to be recorded and made available then other county meetings should be similarly treated.

Chairperson Moyer stated that Ms. Pesce had mentioned recording the Election Board meeting in the Commissioner meeting, which was prior to the Election Board meeting. He stated that he spoke to the IT Department and they would be able to record the monthly meetings. He also stated that once the meeting minutes have been approved the meeting minutes should be posted on the county website. He also stated, however, that only the monthly board meeting could be video recorded and not the Election Day meeting, which could last for days. Board member Gardner stated that he is in favor of the monthly meeting minutes being made available on the county website. Greg Christine, Chief Clerk, recommended that the Election Board send a request to the Board of Commissioners to post the Election minutes on the county website. Hector Ramirez stated that he would like the Election Board meetings be video recorded and posted.

Motion by Board member Peterson, seconded by Board member Gardner to make a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners to consider all of the opportunities for transparency and video recording to the public for the monthly Election Board meetings. Following discussion, the motion carried.

Motion by Board member Gardner, seconded by Board member Peterson and carried to adjourn at 11:08 AM.

Sara May-Silfee, Director of Voter Reg.
