

Takoma Park's board of elections met on 3/12/2020 at 7500 Maple Avenue in Takoma Park, Maryland. Present: Brian Ernst (board chair, calling in); Arthur David Olson (board vice chair); Curtis Antonucci (board member); Matt Ling (ward 2, calling in); Braima Moiforay (board member, arrived during course of meeting); Jessie Carpenter (city clerk, arrived during the course of the meeting); Irma Nalvarte (assistant city clerk).

Because Brian was not at the meeting in person, Arthur David presided and Curtis took the minutes.

Arthur David called the meeting to order at 7:04.

We approved the agenda of the meeting with no changes.

We approved the minutes of the previous meeting with no change.

Arthur David reported on the Ranked Choice Vote Tabulator and the written report. Brian asked if there were any concerns about the Tabulator. Arthur David wanted to make sure that records were produced in a way the tabulator could use, as the system is not currently generally applicable.

Arthur David reported that Matt had been appointed to the Board. The board congratulated Matt.

Arthur David reported on the City Council's discussion on election changes. He reported that the Council had entrusted additional changes to the city attorney.

Irma reported on election mail. She had received some electronic applications and had heard back from Gean Herman and Marilyn Abbott. Greg Lebel has recently filled out an application. We have received about 7 or 8 applications total. Emails went out the day of the meeting and there had not been any responses yet. We will potentially recruit from other City Boards, but no concrete plans are in place.

The media specialist has been at work on the city guide which will be sent out to all. Irma said they have a new intern working on the logo. We hoped for a new logo by the next week.

Irma said the census events may be cancelled. We were going to register people to vote and remind them that we will be holding the city election in november, but we will not know for sure until Jessie came back. Arthur David encouraged the board to contact Irma and help with the events we are free for, assuming they happen.

Arthur David spoke about the possibility of using bookmarks. He said that in 2015 and 2017 elections, we placed them in the independence parade, gave them out, and put them in free little libraries. Now that we know for certain that we will be involved in early voting in Silver Spring, we could produce bookmarks for the upcoming election. Irma asked if we should ask the media specialist for options other than bookmarks. The Board agreed that we should ask the media specialist. Arthur David wanted to have them no later than 4th of July for the independence day parade and celebrate Takoma. Irma agreed to reach out to the media specialist about small media.

We considered bylaws. There were two main issues to discuss: first, there was a change to City Code; the Board of Elections will no longer have bylaws, so we will have to at least change the title of the document to not include bylaws. Second, we extended the terms of officers already in their third years, so we decided that we needed to either remove that bylaw or change it. Arthur David asked if there was anything of concern in the bylaws. Matt said that

Arthur David outlined a lot of the key items, but drew attention to the differences between state and the city. We decided to go through one item at a time.

We reviewed Article 3 section 2. It was a near duplicate of things in the city charter. Arthur David said we should drop due to how it could become contrary to the charter. Matt asked about rules for changing the bylaws. According to Article 8, we may have to review particular material about doing changes in a way that is in accordance with the bylaws. We decided that we were willing to spend this meeting figuring out what changes to make, and to wait until the next meeting to figure out how to do them. Brian asked for clarification about city/county differences. Arthur David said that the county was actually less restrictive than the city. Since this shows up in the charter, we have very little ability to change it. Matt said that it would be helpful for it to be in the bylaws, but we would need to be mindful. We will change the bylaws so that they are the exact same as the charter is now. Matt noted that the charter would overrule the bylaws anyway. The board agreed that we would make that change.

Jessie joined us.

We reviewed Article 2 section 3. The board is currently doing neither of the things the bylaws say. Brian said he is in favor of the annual report as it is useful and that the annual work plan was less useful. Brian recommended either combining the two together or only doing the annual report. Matt said that it could be useful for other people to have because of ranked choice voting. Brian asked Jessie for her opinion on dates. Jessie recommended that the board not make many unnecessary requirements. Matt asked how much effort was required to present the annual report. Jessie said that it would not take much work, but restated her previous recommendation. Arthur David proposed that we keep the annual report exclusively and cut off everything after "April 30th" in the text.

Braima joined us.

We reviewed Article 4 section 2. Matt said it would be fine to get rid of the provision, as it wasn't reflective of what the board currently does. Matt additionally said that there was no reason to have turnover in officers. Brian agreed. The Board decided to get rid of that provision.

We reviewed specific parts of the County code and City code where the City code is much less specific to determine whether the City code was good enough and if the bylaws were good as they were. Matt said that they were good as they currently were, as he did not want to be restricted in political action as he was involved on the state and national level. Jessie noted that there was a previous Board member who left because he wanted to work on the Buttigieg campaign and didn't want to be in a situation where he would be an advisor to the campaign and a BOE member. Jessie said that it made no sense to not be able to sign a petition on the county level, and that they are very limited. Matt agreed, saying that Takoma Park is different. The Board agreed that we do not want to add anything to the bylaws and are happy with the current language. Jessie made clear that we shouldn't wear a presidential candidate button while working in the election. Arthur David confirmed that this statement applied to all election workers.

Matt stated that that articles 8 and 10 (page 7) need to make sure that the references to chapter 2.12 are correct. Arthur David said that we should review the ways to make proper changes in the bylaws next meeting.

We then returned to vendors. We have received 3 quotes. Jessie and Irma met with the ES&S vendors and got a quote for six machines. We have six because ES&S likes to use different machines for early voting. The voting process and reporting charges were discussed by the vendors. This total includes the cost of everything plus the cost of the ballots. Brian noted that the ballots were very expensive. Jessie asked ES&S to get them to quote the different model, but we haven't yet heard back. The field service days include ES&S being there for the first day of early voting and election day to help with set up. They would be very helpful and highly recommend we use it.

Jessie and Irma then reported on MK election services. The quote is currently \$17,700 for central scanning using Choice Plus Pro to tabulate or the universal voting tabulator. They do not provide an accessible option. For both options, we would be handling our own absentee balloting. We would need additional assistance.

Jessie and Irma then reported on IVS. It is \$10,00 for all equipment and software. IVS allows everyone to use the accessible ballot marking system during the election (3 per precinct, 15 total) for \$19,250. IVS has also backed off from trying to use phone ballot marking.

These three are our current options. Arthur wanted to make sure we considered counting by hand. Matt asked about MK accessibility, and what we would end up doing. Jessie said that MK used IVS for accessible voting, and that's how she originally found IVS. Jessie said that we cannot make a decision tonight. We will get more info from ES&S for the next meeting. Jessie wants a good list about what questions we want answers we need to know about IVS and ES&S to make sure we get all of the information we need. Matt asked about how people liked counting by hand. Arthur noted that counting by hand could take 9 hours, and so we would not be able to do the count on election night. Additionally, it would cost \$2,400 dollars total for paying counters. Jessie noted that there would be a lot of difficult activity in just 48 hours if we did a normal count. Brian agreed that 9 hours of counting would be quite taxing.

We went on to discuss the budget. Jessie brought a rough budget, but until we make more decisions it's hard to get exact numbers. Currently, we are factoring in paying \$10,000 for vendors, but we can make the case that we need more money than that. The Council will be reviewing the budget in April, so we can make changes before then. Arthur noted we would be meeting in early April. Jessie asked if the Board could come to a decision before the April meeting. The board agreed that we could come together. Arthur confirmed that Brian could call us together to help out Jessie make that decision. Jessie called attention to the draft budget. Currently, the budget for chief election judges is very low. She based the budget so that there is a lot of money for publicity, outreach, election workers and election judges. \$8,000 is just for judges and workers total. Jessie plans to spend plenty on outreach, and currently thinks that the current money might not even be enough. More details will be prepared in time for the "emergency" meeting. Arthur asked if it was correct that it would be \$2 total cost per ballot for voting by mail. Jessie said that it depends and that postage and envelopes were the mail cost, and would depend on the ballot. Brian asked how many absentees were estimated. Jessie said that about 70 absentees happened last time and so was hoping for about 700.

We then moved on to polling places. Brian said that he already shared opinions on polling places. School gyms will be the most straightforward. The Rec center is the hardest because

there is very little space and no break room. Don Basco is difficult because we still don't have an agreement on splitting space. For Takoma Park Elementary, we have to use their music room rather than their Gym. We need to pay attention to the flow of voters and are currently asking the county for better information as to how they will run things. Jessie says that, in the rec center, we could easily cordon off a part of the Gym as a break area where judges could eat. Brian said that we could probably break in the same spaces as county workers, but we should confirm that with the County. Jessie said that the county probably would and they want us to be successful with our side-by-side election. The County has cooperated well with us so far. Arthur David noted that the County was very helpful with floor plans. We can now do early voting in the Silver Spring Civic Center. Arthur will be working as a provisional judge in the primaries. Hopefully he will be working in Takoma Park. Jessie says that she and Irma want to go into the Takoma Park elections to see. Brian noted that they probably have the same layouts as they have for the general election. Jessie said that they will give us additional information after the primary. Jessie said that she will not be working the Prince Georges primary this time.

We then moved on to the training material. The City Clerk, Deputy City Clerk, and Board Chair have been in charge of "weird stuff." We will need training material for more complicated situations. Jessie said that we actually may already have some sort of material for registering Takoma Park early voters. We may be able to use those materials. Braima suggested we bring the materials to the next meeting. Arthur asked what we need to train chief judges for in the election. Jessie said that chief judges need the ability to troubleshoot, to handle things when pollbooks aren't working or when people say they're registered and they aren't. Arthur said that there are some routine things, like starting and shutting down polls, that chief judges should be familiar with. Jessie said that the board will need to think about connecting the poll book between polling places. Arthur David said that he is not interested in connecting poll books, given previous issues. Jessie said that we should train chief judges about how to set up the night before and how to deal with questions from candidates. Fortunately, we will have the county rules to act upon regarding candidate questions, not just the city's. Arthur said that we can always have people simply call Jessie. We have the chief judges manuals that the county has, and we should review those for additional information. Arthur asked who would like to help with the process. Curtis, Arthur, Matt and Braima volunteered to help. We don't expect to need rules around scanners, but that is not sure yet. Any equipment instructions will be provided by the vendors. Arthur suggested that we may want this material done by the July meeting. Jessie said that there is the possibility of meeting twice a month as we draw closer to the election. Brian suggested we start that in September and October. Jessie said that we could figure that out in the Summer. Arthur said that we should decide it at the next regular meeting, and that he would provide dates to avoid when scheduling.

We have the next meeting down for Thursday April 9th, but there could easily be another meeting before then. We will set the additional meeting by email. The community center will be closed to the public starting tomorrow, so we may not be able to meet in person. Jessie believes that there are plenty of alternative ways to meet, but we will likely not meet for the next two weeks. Brian said that on April 9th there may be visitors coming to stay with him, but currently

there may very well not be any visitors. We will keep april 16th around as a snow date. Brian noted that having a snowdate would work well in general.

The board thanked Curtis for taking notes.

Arthur David Olson, presiding

Curtis Antonucci, recording