



DUVAL COUNTY ELECTION ADVISORY PANEL

MINUTES

November 16, 2022

3:00 p.m.

**Don Davis Room
1st floor, City Hall**

Attendance: Robert Phillips (remotely via telephone), Daniel Henry, Austin Kiwkkel, Ingrid Montgomery

Excused: None

Absent: Nancy Chrisman, Charles McWhite, Robert Maldonado, Ray Pringle

Also: Jeff Clements – City Council Research Division

Daniel Henry called the meeting to order at 3:18 p.m. and the attendees introduced themselves for the record.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the September 21, 2022 meeting of the Election Advisory Panel were **deferred to a future meeting** since a quorum of members was not physically present as required for voting.

Supervisor of Elections update

Robert Phillips of the Supervisor's office reported that training is ongoing for the upcoming elections. The biggest factor was the court case on redistricting. Out of 18187,000 voters were affected and new voter ID cards are being mailed this week and next week.

Old Business

ExpressVote equipment purchases: Mr. Phillips reported that the City Council had approved the SOE's budget request to purchase additional ExpressVote units and they were in place and utilized for early voting for the general election. In response to a question about plans for purchasing additional equipment, Mr. Phillips said that will be a decision for the new Supervisor of Elections determined by the spring City elections in conjunction with the City Council.

Election Advisory Panel vacancies: Chairman Maldonado said that he would be drafting a letter to the EAP's various appointing authorities (Mayor, City Council President, Supervisor of Elections) informing them of the Panel's current position vacancies or members serving on expired terms and asking them for nominees to fill those seats. In response to a question from the Chair about the rules regarding excessive

absenteeism, Mr. Clements said the Ordinance Code provides that a board or commission may declare a seat to be vacant due to multiple unexcused absences.

New Business

Election of Officers: lacking a quorum present, the election was deferred to a future meeting. In response to a question from the Chair, Panel members Kwikkel and Pringle indicated interest in offering themselves as candidates for election.

Ray Pringle asked that the door to the Don Davis Room be kept open before the meeting for wheelchair users to get into the room unaided. Staff will be sure to open the door before meetings.

Public comment

Ben Frazier of the Northside Coalition said the Election Advisory Panel needs to get rid of members who don't attend and fill the seats with people who will get the job done. The EAP is doing a bad job of encouraging people to vote; there is no enthusiasm, no new ideas, no encouragement. Inspire people to vote.

Lanelle Phillmon said she got very good training as a precinct manager and was happy with her experience and the materials provided. She just ordered a VBM ballot via her phone and it appears that she is going to get a ballot. She works at a shared precinct and saw over 100 people whose voter information card had the wrong precinct number for their home address. She hopes the Canvassing Board will do a public debrief about what the biggest ballot problems were so that can be addressed and voters can be educated to avoid them in the future. She asked for clarification about the notification that will go out to the 100,000 vote-by-mail ballot applicants.

Mr. Phillips said the District 6/11 boundary that splits the Bartram Park area is problematic but there are very few potential polling places in that area, thus the need for a shared precinct. The numbering problem on the voter registration cards may have resulted from voters having old cards from prior to the last redistricting 10 years ago. The biggest problem with ballots was voters crossing out one vote and checking another. The SOE advises that if you erroneously mark a ballot, ask for another ballot. He said the Canvassing Board looks for clear voter intent when determining how a vote should be counted. The biggest problem causing provisional voting was registrations submitted after the deadline.

Ms. Phillmon said she has had an application for membership on the EAP on file with the Mayor and City Council for over 3 years and still has not been appointed.

Chairman Maldonado said the EAP is an advisory body to the Supervisor of Elections and City Council. It's not the EAP's charge to generate voter turnout. The EAP is happy to have citizen input and welcomes public comment at meetings.

Rosemary McCoy said it appears the EAP doesn't have much influence if it can't get its appointing authorities to fill vacant seats. Everyone needs to do better to encourage and educate voters so they are effective. Voting needs to be celebrated - early voting should be a celebratory time. Low voter turnout is discouraging and that means elected officials aren't as motivated to listen to issues in that area. The closure of the Gateway Center early voting site hurts that community; Edward Waters University and the Prime Osborn Convention Center are not good substitutes for Gateway because of transportation issues for Gateway area residents. Senior citizens think the ballot font is too small and hard to read. She suggested the Adams-Jenkins Arena, the Schell Sweet Resource Center, or the Nathaniel Glover Stadium at EWU as early voting sites. Mr. Phillips said he understands Schell Sweet Center has a private tenant that would have to be moved to make early voting there a possibility.

Chairman Maldonado asked Mr. Phillips how early voting sites are chosen. He said that early voting sites must be a public library, community center, convention center or other large public building. The SOE didn't want to leave the Gateway site but the building owner ended the lease. The Joseph Lee Community Center was the closest, best alternative. They look for new sites in high growth areas. A new state law allowing petition gatherers to be on-site at polling places turned off many churches. Also, many churches now operate schools and that doesn't work well with voters trying to park mixing with school pickup and drop-off traffic. Mr. Henry said the SOE can unilaterally choose early voting sites, while City Council has to approve voting precinct changes. Mr. Phillips said Supervisor of Elections Mike Hogan reads and answers all his emails, so problems, comments or suggestions can be made to him that way.

Sam Coodley of All Voting is Local thanked the SOE for promising to get VBM renewals out by the end of the year. He asked if the notice would include information on all the valid identity proof methods so that voters can be sure to provide that. Mr. Phillips said the mailers will be going out to people who already have voted by mail, so they should already have their identifiers on file. That's why the SOE sent out a mailer earlier this year to inform everyone about the need to provide their valid identifiers. The universe of 100,000 recipients is everyone they identified as being dropped out of the system after the last general election. He confirmed that postage-paid reply cards will be included in the mailer. Mr. Coodley said that many SOEs across Florida are highlighting all of the recent state law changes prominently on their websites. His organization and others are happy to help get the word out to voters.

Mr. Coodley said that Chauncey Whaley with EWU student government had been at the meeting to speak but had to leave for an emergency. He was going to convey that EWU student government was doing lots of voter activation initiatives. The EWU early voting site produced twice as many voters as the Prime Osborn Convention Center. Please go back to the Schell Sweet Center at EWU – the tenant is willing to accommodate early voting and work with the SOE. The Joseph Lee Center drew even fewer early voters than the Prime Osborn Center. In response to a question from Mr. Coodley about efforts to inform the public about the change of early voting locations, Mr. Phillips said the SOE had an employee stationed at the old Gateway site pointing voters to the Joseph Lee Center.

Velma Rounsville, a poll manager, said there's a need to get the ExpressVote machines out in the community outside of election time for voters to try them out and get comfortable with their operation. She suggested getting the media to show how easy it is to use to encourage their use. Mr. Phillips said the SOE welcomes groups coming to the Election Operations Center for tours and demonstrations, and there are user instructions on the SOE website. Ray Pringle suggested that the SOE specifically invite groups to come in for demonstrations, not wait to be asked. Ms. Rounsville suggested specifically inviting senior groups to come try out the ExpressVote machines.

Next meeting

February 15, 2023

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Jeff Clements, Council Research Division
(904) 255-5137 jeffc@coj.net
Posted 4.17.23 11:30 p.m.