

TOWN OF EAST MONTPELIER
BOARD OF CIVIL AUTHORITY
Wednesday, January 26, 2022, 6:30 p.m.

Present: Amy Willis, Carl Etnier, Jon Jewett, Rosie Laquerre, Kate Phillips, Elise Thorsen, Jan Aldrich, Edie Miller, Lindy Johnson, Ginny Burley, Jez Harrington

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by Chair, Jan Aldrich.

- Agenda Revisions - none
- Public Comment - none
- Approval of Draft Minutes – November 8, 2021: Mr. Etnier asked to amend the minutes to provide clearer language in paragraph four of the reapportionment discussion. Ms. Burley moved to approve the minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Mr. Jewett. The minutes were approved as amended.

REDISTRICTING DISCUSSION: Although the current map from the Legislative Apportionment Board (LAB) shows all of East Montpelier and Middlesex as we requested. Edie suggested she could be available to testify on February 4 if necessary. Mr. Harrington asked about what changes were made. Mr. Etnier suggested that it's important for us to have a person testifying in person, even if via Zoom. Ms. Laquerre will contact the LAB to determine specific information relative to when Ms. Miller would need to present to the Government Operations Committee.

LIMITED OVERVIEW OF NEW ELECTION LAW

- Tabulator Use for in-person early voting: Due to changes in the law last summer, we are permitted to allow individual voters to insert their early ballots into the tabulator. For several reasons, Ms. Laquerre does not recommend instituting this change for Town Meeting. Mr. Etnier asked whether this practice was required, with Ms. Laquerre clarifying that it is not. She noted that the ballot for the Central Vermont Career Center is not able to be mailed with the other ballots and will be mailed from the town office by request only. There was a question relative to how people will know to get this ballot. Given that we have some people who do not use computers, they won't know that they are missing a ballot. Mr. Etnier asked that an insert making people aware of the CVCC ballot be included. Ms. Laquerre will ask L. Brown to include an insert.

Ms. Miller offered an article that is going into the SignPost that describes the CVCC vote.

Ms. Laquerre also noted that ballot envelopes are much smaller this year and showed the group samples she had received from the printer. Although they will be scored to fit the certificate envelopes when folded on the score lines, they may be difficult to tabulate. After some discussion the group determined that there will be enough time during the day to ensure proper insertion to the tabulator. Ms. Laquerre will use ballots with several folds during tabulator testing to confirm. Mr. Jewett offered to assist with tabulator testing. Ms. Laquerre will ensure that there is enough equipment available to unfold folds. The group decided that pre-tabulation would not be necessary for this election.

- Defective Ballot Notification and Cure: Ms. Laquerre defined a defective ballot for the group. An incomplete certificate envelope, ballots not in the certificate envelope, no signature on the certificate envelope, are all defective. Historically, the BCA makes the decision relative to whether the voter is identifiable and/or what the voter's intent was. The new law does not allow Town Clerks to make those determinations. A notification must be made to the voter via mail (up to 7 days prior to election), via e-mail or phone. Ms. Laquerre will create a form with the proper notification language since the Secretary of State's office does not yet have a postcard available. Ms. Laquerre noted that the procedure requires her to open the outer envelope to check-in the ballot. If the ballot is found to be defective, a notice will be sent. All ballots now need to be checked in within three days of receipt.

TOWN MEETING PREP

- Approve use of exterior ballot drop box for ballot deposit for all future elections:
- Approve use of ballot drop box for use throughout election day.
Carl Etnier moved to approve the use of the exterior ballot drop box for ballot deposit for all future elections throughout each election day. Ms. Miller seconded. There was discussion relative to the safety and lifespan of the box. Ms. Laquerre noted that it's constructed of heavy-duty steel that is bolted down to a concrete pad. The motion passed.
- Discuss allowing tabulator use for in-person early voting: previously discussed.
- Discuss staffing needs for election day: Ms. Laquerre noted that check-in needs to be performed consistently, and she would like to have no more than three people throughout the day on check in. Ms. Laquerre will send a Google Sheet for work shift sign up in a couple of weeks.

General volunteers from the community will be recruited as well. Mr. Etnier asked that all election workers be vaccinated. Mr. Etnier moved that all election workers for Town Meeting Day 2022 in East Montpelier be fully vaccinated, including booster if eligible. Ms. Burley seconded the motion. The motion passed. Ms. Laquerre will arrange for a vaccination attestation to be built into the election worker Oath sheet.

Ms. Laquerre announced that since she has been elected as WCUUSD Clerk, the commingling of ballots will now occur at East Montpelier, and she will need to pull a couple of people from the town count team for the school count. Because we are using a tabulator, WCUUSD ballots can be tabulated as soon as all reports for the town have been run. We are not required to wait for other towns to send their representatives since we no longer hand count. There was a bit of discussion relative to how the process works with one tabulator and write-ins.

ADJOURN: Ms. Miller moved to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Thorsen. The meeting adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosie Laquerre, Town Clerk