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**Minutes of the Richland County Board of Elections & Voter Registration**

**Special Meeting**

**July 23, 2020**

**4:00 PM**

**In Attendance**

**Board Members**

1. Dr. Charles P. Austin, Sr. - Chair
2. Dr. Duncan A. Buell – Vice Chair
3. Mrs. Anjanette D. President
4. Mrs. Yolanda Y. Taylor

**Staff Members**

Ms. Alexandria Stephens

Mr. Terry Graham, Sr.

Mrs. Rebecca Brown

Mr. John Mosley

Ms. Sheron Harris

Miss Lakeisha Diggs

Mr. Cale Carter

**Call to Order**

A meeting of the Richland County Board of Elections & Voter Registration was called to order on Thursday July 23, 2020 at 4:00 PM with Chair Dr. Austin presiding.

**Moment of Meditation**

Dr. Austin called for a Moment of Meditation.

**Adoption of Agenda**

Dr. Buell moved that we approve the agenda. Mrs. President seconded the motion. The vote in favor was unanimous.

**Approval of Minutes** – Dr. Buell moved to accept with the exception of the word location. It should be locations. Seconded by Mrs. Taylor. Vote in favor was unanimous.

**Manager Division Reports**

Election Systems- Mr. Mosley stated he made updates to the inventory checklist. Each machine will have its own checklist. All voting supplies and equipment are being stored at the Warehouse. Updated status of PLT hiring process. Goal is to hire 30 PLTS. State of readiness would be a 10.

Precinct and Poll Workers -1500 applications, 500 additional applications. Four temporary staff members, experience as poll workers will start work 7/27/2020. They will be contacting poll worker applicants. Stated they are going through their supplies to see what is needed. Approximately 200 applicants had been contacted at that time.

Voter Registration- the City of Columbia is collaborating with us to make sure we have a successful election. They will be opening their facilities to us for polling locations. All poll workers have been paid. Seventy-nine precincts were confirmed, still waiting on school districts two and five. Will be reaching out to precincts that we haven’t heard from.

Absentee Services- One Petition submitted for Soil and Water. Richland District One and Two and Lexington Five candidate filing begins August 3, 2020 at noon. Absentee request for mail in 21,341 and 13,100 returned. Looking into additional venues for satellite locations. Looking for workers for the day before and on Election Day. SE Adult Activity Center, Ballentine, and Parklane Centers. We will have absentee voting at the Office, and we are looking for three more satellite locations. People may apply for mail-in absentee ballots now. They will be mailed in October. UOCAVA 500 email ballots to mail out. For security purposes, the location chosen needs to be close to our Office. Space in the RC Administration Bldg. is limited. Dr. Buell asked if USC was close enough, and Ms Harris stated it depended on the location. Mrs. Taylor asked how absentee voting was being advertised. Dr. Buell analyzed the Absentee information on the website. Mrs. President asked about whether we contacted an Alumni Center. Dr. Austin stated we should reach out to Ms. Stephens about locations that would be suitable.

Voter Outreach – September virtual event with the Richland County Library. Most of our events will begin again once covid-19 slows down. Please contact the office two weeks in advance for Outreach events. Organizations have not been requesting outreach events.

**Director’s Report-** Public concerns that Ms Stephens has been receiving, about poll workers and replying to applications. Poll workers will have PPEs available as before and we will practice social distancing by marking off 6’ increments with tape. Another issue brought up was how voters do not complete the absentee application request process possibly due to not having a printer. In addition, people were sending in the November applications instead of the one for June. We will have one email account that all Managers will access. We are encouraging people to apply for the poll worker positions by calling the office or emailing election.worker@richlandcountysc.gov. We do not have a total at this time for all of the supplies we need, but we will be working on getting those figures. Dr. Austin suggested that clerks get proper authorization before making purchases for their polling locations. Mrs. President asked about carts being available at polling locations.

**Board Chair Comments-** Dr. Austin is looking forward to receiving reports to know where we stand. In August and September, meetings will be bi-weekly, and in October, there will be weekly meetings. Manager reports are encouraging, because we are all on the same page and the information is consistent. Executive Andino sent a letter to Senator Heeler and SOH Lucas about preparation for the Election. The Board should publicly endorse the efforts by the Executive Director of the State Election Commission. Dr. Buell moved to endorse the letter and efforts by sending a letter to Senator Heeler and SOH Lucas. Mrs. Taylor seconded. Vote in favor was unanimous.

**Public Participation**

Mrs. Woodford asked if we are using Clerks for training to take some of the stress from the Office. Ms. Stephens stated that is something that is being assessed. She still wants to sit down with management to come up with a plan of action and then we will be able to better answer that question.

Mrs. Woodford mentioned that Dr. Austin stated several times that a panel of experience clerks would meet and wanted to know where we are with that, because she had not been contacted. Ms Stephens stated we are bringing on poll workers to recruit applicants to be poll workers. The plan hasn’t changed but we are taking a different route. Mrs. Woodford stated she thought there would be a panel to discuss best practices.

Mrs. Edie Willard suggested using the Mason Lodge available for satellite absentee voting. She stated this location was ideal for people with special needs.

Mr. Pete Kennedy asked if ED Andino’s letter was approved. It was and was actually published in the State Newspaper.

Mr. Gus Philpott suggesting using an empty grocery store by the Drew Wellness Center for training.

He also suggested re-training experienced clerks, since some were doing what worked best for them.

Mrs. Edie Willard also suggested using the National Guard Armory as a precinct location because it is large, has table, and chairs. She also inquired about the vacancy for the Board Member seat. We have not received any information about it as of yet.

Rep. Annie McDaniel discussed poll workers not getting compensation for working long hours. Dr. Austin stated he would be visiting it.

Dr. Austin gave remarks about how encouraging it is that we will all be working together and having the open levels of communications to have a successful election cycle.

Rep. Bernstein stated there is no meeting scheduled to discuss the open Board Member position.

**Board Comments- No board comments, except Dr. Buell stated to move forward. Dr. Austin stated the pathway to success would be to continue this avenue of communication.**

**Mrs. Taylor moved for adjournment. Dr. Buell seconded. The meeting was adjourned.**

**Submitted by:** Ms. Michelle D. Harrington, Administrative Coordinator

The next meeting will be held August 6, 2020 at 4pm.