

Sylvia Engel – President

Daniel Frankel – Secretary &
Commissioner of Registration

Donald Katz – Commissioner

Beatrice Moskowitz –
Commissioner



Thomas Lynch – Administrator

Valerie Henry – Deputy Administrator

Linda Palughi – Chief Clerk

BOARD OF ELECTIONS
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MINUTES

BOARD OF ELECTIONS REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING **AUGUST 18, 2020**

The Regular Meeting of the Middlesex County Board of Elections was called to order by Chairman Engel at 4:00 p.m. Flag salute followed.

Maria Tani called the roll as follows:

Chairman Engel (present)
Commissioner Katz (present)

Commissioner Frankel (present)
Commissioner Moskowitz (present)

In attendance were:

Staff: Thomas Lynch, Administrator
Valerie Henry, Deputy Administrator (via Teams)
Linda Palughi, Chief Clerk
Sharonda Rice-Mc Farlane, Deputy Chief Clerk
Maria Tani, Administrative Assistant
Stephen Nyers, Supervisor VMB

Guests: Per sign-in sheet
Elaine Flynn, County Clerk (via phone)
Deborah Braga, County Clerk Supervisor (via phone)

Motion was made by Commissioner Katz to adopt the minutes of the June 4th Regular, July 2nd Commissioners Review, July 7th Mail-in Ballot Hearing, July 17th Post-Election Mail-in Ballot Hearing, July 23rd Commissioner Review, July 30th Provisional Ballot Hearing and August 3rd Emergency Meeting. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Frankel. Voice vote 4-0.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion with Elaine Flynn, County Clerk on Burgundy Ballot Bags

Comm. Frankel inquired if in the upcoming General Election, the County Clerk would be using the same burgundy ballot bags that were used for the Primary Election. Deborah Braga, County Clerk Supervisor, stated that the same bags and same blue seals would be used however they are looking into adding extra protection; padlock or zip lock. Comm. Frankel inquired if there would be any improvement to the red seal. Ms. Braga stated that they are looking for suggestions. Comm. Frankel inquired if any of the poll worker instructions would have to be changed. Ms. Braga stated poll workers should not touch the blue seal. Instructions and a checklist will be included for the poll workers. Ms. Braga mentioned that for the Primary Election the bags were overstuffed. She recommends having an extra bag or giving the poll workers extra seals so if the seal breaks it can be replaced.

Comm. Katz noted that he observed at the prior meeting where a number of ballot bags were opened, none of those bags were anywhere near full, let alone overstuffed.

Overview of Governor Murphy Executive Order 177

Administrator Lynch reviewed the EO. He highlighted a few items that are different from the previous order: 1) Polling places will be designated to receive mail-in ballots. 2) The Board will have the ability to continue counting past November 3rd. 3) The cure process will continue for the November Election. 4) The Board is required to have more meetings. 5) There will be no extensions for the November Election **past November 20th**.

Stephen Nyers – Supervisor VMB

Mr. Nyers reviewed his written report. Mr. Nyers took part in a post-election survey with the Municipal Clerks, for the General Election.

Linda Palughi – Chief Clerk

Ms. Palughi reviewed her written report. Chairman Engel inquired who picked up the ballots from the drop boxes at 8:00 p.m. on election night. Ms. Palughi stated that the Municipal Clerks locked the boxes at 8:00 p.m. and the warehouse staff picked up the ballots.

Thomas Lynch – Administrator

Administrator Lynch reviewed his written report. Administrator Lynch stated that Ms. Palughi and Ms. Tani separated examples of marked ballots into categories which were shared with the Attorney General's Office. A response has not yet been received.

The Board discussed the need for additional laptops and scanners for the new seasonal employees. A list will be provided to the County IT Department.

Commissioners Comments

None

Public Comment

Mr. Kratovil inquired how many polling places would be available for the November General Election. The Board stated that this has not yet been determined.

Mr. Kratovil stated that there was an issue with ballot bags and seals. He inquired if any ballots were not counted due to this issue. Administrator Lynch indicated that the Board accepted for review all the ballots from these bags.

Mr. Kratovil mentioned that there is still no meeting schedule on the Board of Elections website.

Ms. Panos inquired who monitors how many ballots each voter drops in the drop box. The Board indicated that there is a surveillance camera installed at each drop box location. The camera is maintained by appropriate municipal employees. Ms. Panos requested that the Board review at least one video to verify that voters are not dropping off more than one ballot.

Ms. Panos inquired who makes sure that the poll workers are wearing their badge on Election Day.

Ms. Panos mentioned that due to the pandemic the staff is currently in two locations. She spoke of maintaining party balance between the two locations.

Ms. Panos discussed a personnel complaint against a Board employee with the Commissioners.

Motion was made by Comm. Moskowitz to go into executive session at 5:30 p.m. Motion was seconded by Comm. Katz. Voice vote 4-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.