

BOARD OF CIVIL AUTHORITY
PRE-ELECTION MEETING
JULY 2, 2020

DATE, TIME, PLACE AND PURPOSE OF MEETING

The Board of Civil Authority of the Town of Halifax met Thursday, July 2, 2020 at 7:15 P.M. in the front parking lot at the Town Office located at the West Halifax Elementary School to discuss upcoming elections in August and November. Primary focus was voter and Election Official safety against Covid-19.

BCA MEMBERS PRESENT:

Lewis Sumner and Mitch Green (Board of Selectmen); Malcolm K. Sumner, Craig J. Stone, Patricia Pusey, Kaitlin Stone and Joan Wonsey-Courser (Justices of the Peace); and Patricia Dow, Town Clerk were present. Brandley Rafus was absent.

CALL TO ORDER:

The BCA pre-election meeting was called to order by Craig Stone, Chairman at 7:17 P.M. The meeting was then turned over to the Clerk, Patricia Dow.

DESIGNATION OF POLLING PLACE

Dow discussed the reasons for moving the polling place from the Halifax Multipurpose room to the Halifax Community Hall. Primary reasons being safety for the upcoming school year against Covid-19 and having to move the voting for the General Election in November. The Gym could be used for the August primary but voting would have to move for the November election anyway, the school will most likely need to use the gym for makeshift classrooms. The fire house could be used but it might be cold in November. The Town Office is too small. Joan Courser agreed that the ballot booths can be kept at the Community Hall until the General Election. A motion was made by Malcolm Sumner to designate the Halifax Community Hall as the polling place for the August 2020 Primary and the November General Election and was seconded by Lewis Sumner. It was so voted 8-0.

GUIDANCE ON BALLOT CLERKS DURING VOTING

Dow went through these bulleted items one by one.

- *Should the hours normally being 10 am to 7pm be shortened?* Other towns are shortening the hours for clerks and having replacements half way through the day. The board discussed and decided that the workers hours should be kept 10 am to 7 pm. Patricia Pusey asked if there are backup Clerks. Dow stated the list has dwindled. Craig Stone stated with the uncertainty of the virus the list may dwindle even more. The board decided it can be up to the Ballot Clerk individually if they want a shorter exposure for their workday. Patricia Pusey made a motion to leave it the same and up to the Clerks, Mitch Green seconded the motion. It was so voted 8-0.
- *Do we want any plexiglass dividers between the ballot clerks?* It was discussed about having built plexiglass dividers in between the Clerks. Dow stated there is a local person that can make the appropriate dividers. Patricia Pusey made a motion to purchase Plexiglas dividers for the safety of the Clerks. Mitch Green seconded the motion.

- *Should we have plexiglass divider in front of ballot clerks?* Dow described and discussed the Plexiglas dividers in front of the Clerks. The builder will build the forms to fit as needed. It was agreed and Joan Courser made a motion to allow spending the money to have plexiglass dividers in front of the Clerks and Patricia Pusey seconded the motion.
- *I have PPE package from the Elections Division from the State of VT containing items ie masks, hand sanitizer, wipes, face shield are supposed to be coming,* Dow discussed the items which were sent from the Secretary of States Election office for personal protection for the Clerks and the Voters. Dow also mentioned face shields are on order.

GUIDANCE ON PUBLIC SAFETY PROCEDURES FOR VOTING

- *Entrance one side of the building and exit through the other with exception to the handicap.* Everyone would enter through the front door and exit through the back door unless they are handicap. Pusey suggested contact paper star for social distancing.
- *Should we not use the voting curtains?* Green stated it is important for privacy. Dow stated concerns about the cleanliness. Sue Kelly stated it was not necessary to use every booth in the largeness of the Hall. Kaitlin Stone suggested leaving the curtains on everyone other one to block them off. Craig Stone suggested to put up a barrier for the public to stay behind to observe.
- *Should we block every other voting booth?*
- *Should we have extra voting available on tables with social distancing dividers?* Dow suggested a plywood divider for table top voting. Pusey stated if we block off every other booth we would be down to 3 or 4 booths for voting. Pusey stated if they are not comfortable being out they will vote absentee. No one knows that option exists.
- *What kind of dividers? Where do I go for that?*
- *Should we spray down and wipe down each booth or table after it is used?* Until the booth is sprayed down and cleaned it is not available for use by a voter. Sue Kelly stated it will result in multiple people touching the curtains. It was agreed to have the booths sprayed down and cleaned in between voters.
- *Should we have pencils for each voter to pick up at the entrance checklist table and deposit in a box at the exit table?* 400 pencils will be purchased for each voter to use their own pencil. Green stated to encourage people to bring their own. Golf pencils were recommended and they were inexpensive. The group decided that purchasing the golf pencils would be an easy solution.
- *Hand sanitizer at entrance and exit for voter to use*
- *Traffic cones spaced 6 feet apart with signs to wait here.* Dow spoke about the use of traffic cones and use vinyl clings on the cones and on the floors.
- *Should we have squares on the floor 6 feet apart for waiting?*
- *Should we get printed signs for social distancing to be used at the primary and the general elections and possible future elections as well* Dow asked about professionally made signs that can be reused for social distancing. Mitch Green made a motion to purchase signs, Patricia Pusey seconded the motion. It was so voted 8-0.
- *Are masks/face shield going to be required for all voters?* Pusey said yes everyone should wear masks. Kaitlin Stone stated we will have to see what the requirements are at that time. Kelly made a point to ensure the safety of handing out masks to the voters who need it. Dow stated it would be the first Clerk at the entrance that would hand out the masks. Tongs may be used to hand out masks.

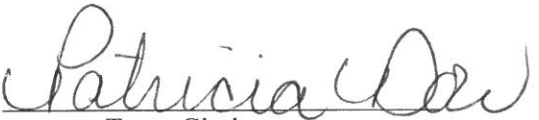
- *We will have to have someone clean and disinfect the community hall after voting. Do we want that done that night or the next day?* Malcolm Sumner made a motion to have Keith Anyan clean the Hall for \$ 100 the next day. Craig Stone seconded the motion. It was so voted 8-0.
- *Do we want the bathrooms cleaned once during the day or just the next day?* It was decided to not have mid-day cleaning of the bathrooms.
- It was asked what the fire code occupancy of the Hall is. It was asked who would monitor the number of people in the building at one time. Kelly stated that if everyone sticks to the spaces on the wait here spots then that is the only number of people allowed in the building.

GUIDANCE ON BALLOT COUNTING AT THE END OF THE EVENING

- *Should gloves be worn by all? And should I provide that or have all of you bring ones that actually fit?* Dows asks if everyone wants to wear gloves? The group decided that 3 boxes of gloves should be purchased small, medium and large to fit everyone. Craig Stone asks if the State has provided guidance on counting and pairing people up. Dow stated no guidance has been given yet. Pusey asked how many tables to we usually have for counting. Dow stated for the Primary usually have 5 pairs of people. For the General there should be a minimum of 10 pairs since there will be at least 400 voters or more. Malcolm asked if a pair of counters could take their ballots and go to a different spot for the General Election for social distancing. Malcolm expressed concerns over the noise with counters being too close and it is hard to focus.

ADJOURNMENT the Pre-Election Hearing was at 7:55 P.M.

Minutes dated July July 4, 2020

Attest: 
Town Clerk
Board of Civil Authority