

MINUTES
KENT COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

February 13th, 2025

Present

Lisa Thompson, President
Scott Lockerman, Vice President
Paul Showalter, Secretary
Barbara Reed, Member
Mary Brown Walker, Member
Charles MacLeod, Board Attorney

Staff

Cheemoandia Blake, Election Director
Michelle Holliday, Election Program Specialist II

I. Call Meeting to Order

Lisa Thompson called the meeting to order at 8:42 am and had everyone introduce themselves.

II. Welcome Guest(s)

Diane Butler, Andy Butler, Shawn Poulson, Barbara Flook, Janice Plotczyk, Gerald Dockstader, Karen Kemp-Dockstader, Dawn Wright, Dr. O'Connor, Kashira Brooks, Lenny Thompson, Wanda Boyer(GT), Sonya Somerville-Jeff(GT), Guy Mickley(GT)

III. Approval of Minutes

Lisa Thompson made a motion to approve the minutes with corrections, Paul Showalter seconded the motion—the motion passed.

IV. Old Business

a. Canvass Minutes – Minutes will be sent to the board for review and approval.

b. 2024 Election- Ms. Blake asked the board if there was anything they wanted to discuss regarding the 2024 PG election, such as polling place, election judge issues or any concerns they may have had. Barbara Reed stated that Mrs. Blake does not follow the state law regarding the appointment of the election judge. Other than that, there were no other issues or concerns. The board agreed that Ms. Blake and her staff had a successful election.

c. Brief discussion – Barbara Reed inquired why Shawn Poulson was not hired as a Chief Judge, since KCBE needs Republican judges. Election Director, Cheemoandia Blake explain that once an election judge is assigned, they are required to work both Primary and General Election per state law, unless they were deemed to be incompetent by the board. The board will then decide to remove and replace them.

Ms. Blake stated that Shawn Poulson was offered a position as a standby unit judge, Mr. Polson attended the mandatory training on Sept 18th, 2024. After training Mr. Polson asked if he was called before or on election day and decided to decline the offer, what would happen. Ms. Blake advised Mr. Polson that the election office would contact the next standby judge on the waiting list. Barbara inquired about the election judges; Barbara stated that the parties should be equal.

Ms. Blake explained once again, that in 2020 and 2022, election judge applications were mailed to all republican households. 80 % of the applications that were returned stated that they were not interested in working as an election judge. Any applicants that were interested were sent an assignment and training date.

Ms. Blake also referred to the letter submitted by Jarad Demaris regarding the recruitment of election judges has always been a difficult and trying task. The law permits the appointment of an election judge from outside the county in which they are serving and election judges who are not affiliated with either party to serve as an election judge. There are never enough election judges on call to serve, individuals get sick, have emergencies, transportation issues and other issues that may prevent them from serving on election day. An election judge partisan affiliation does not impact or determine the outcome of the election.

The party affiliation of an Election judges does not stop the voter from casting their ballot or disenfranchise a voter. Ms. Blake supplied the board members with the election judge's applications to help with future recruitment. Ms. Blake also advised the board to follow up with the election office and potential future election judges during the recruitment process.

V. New Business

a. Meeting Minutes—Barbara Reed stated that on the 12/5/24 minutes her name was misspelled, to which Cheemoandia Blake replied to the correction would be made immediately

b. Canvass Minutes—Barbara Reed stated that on the 2024 Presidential General canvass minutes her political party was listed incorrectly to which Cheemoandia Blake thanked Mrs. Reed for making her aware of the oversight and that the correction would be made immediately.

c. Election Judges-- Barbara Reed brought up concerns that there were not enough Republican judges, Cheemoandia Blake reminded Barbara that in the past election

judge interest letters were sent to every Republican household in Kent County, also we enlisted the RCC to help us recruit Republican judges and asked the board members to help with recruitment by participating in voter outreach events.

Brief Discussion:

Barbara Reed wants to assign judges, Paul Showalter responded that it is the board's job to help recruit election judges and approve the list of judges. The board is not responsible for assigning election judges.

Dawn Wright stated that often new judges must start at "the bottom" and work their way up. New hires should not start in as chief judges' position without an opening chief judge position.

Chip MacLeod (board attorney) explained the process of trying to recruit from Washington College (political science majors) so that they could not only gain real world experience, get paid in the process, but also receive college credit.

Miss. Blake stated that in the past Michelle Holliday has worked with Professor Patrick Nugent to train students for voter registration as well as encouraging them to become election judges.

It was also stated that it is hard to recruit judges in this county when they see the difference in pay in the surrounding counties—Cheemoandia Blake will do a spreadsheet to see what other counties are paying and attempt to get an increase in pay for the judges here in Kent.

Wanda Boyer states that she has never seen chief judges be disrespected to the degree that they were during the 2024 General Election—she witnessed a Pollbook judge on the phone while writing on paper and taking photos after being told that was unacceptable by the chief judge. The pollbook judge stated they were being picked on, the chief judge let them know that they were told during training the rules of phones in the polling place. Wanda Boyer also stated there were a lot of inappropriate conversations taking place, signs were placed in the no electioneering zone as well.

Barbara questioned whether Scott Lockerman attended the December meeting to which Cheemoandia Blake showed that the minutes reflected that Scott Lockerman did in fact attend the December meeting virtually.

Dr. O'Connor inquired if there was a course on implied bias.

d. Chief Judge Lessons Learn – Barbara Reed inquired about the next Chief Judges lesson learn meeting. Michelle Meekins will send a poll out to all Chief Judges to see who would be interested in a second lesson learn meeting. Miss. Blake also advised the board that the lesson-learning meeting is only for chief judges only. Chief Judges stated that they feel more comfortable speaking freely about their experiences and concerns in a controlled environment.

VI. Adjournment

The motion to adjourn the meeting was made at 9:25 am by Lisa Thompson, the motion was seconded by Scott Lockerman, the motion was passed by all.

VII. Closed Session

Closed session—the board closed the meeting at 9:25 am to discuss other matters or points of concern.

VII. Adjournment of Closed Session

At 10:33 am Lisa Thompson made a motion to adjourn the closed session meeting, seconded by Paul Showalter. Approved by all. The board returned from the closed meeting at 10:33 am.

There being no further business, Lisa Thompson again made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:34 am, at which point the motion was seconded, then passed by all.

The next board meeting is scheduled for March 6th, 2025, at 8:30 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

President:_____

Secretary:_____