



UNION COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, AUGUST 8, 2023

The meeting of the Union County Board of Elections was called to order by Chair Clara Harelik at 10:35am. The following were in attendance: Chair Clara Harelik, Esq.; Secretary / Commissioner of Registration James Foerst, Esq.; Commissioner Richard Fortunato, Esq.; Commissioner Dennis Kobitz; Commissioner Raymond Szpond; Administrator Nicole DiRado; Deputy Administrator Linda Wise; and Chief Coordinator Bridget Sloane were present. Commissioner Debra Varnerin was absent.

The Statement of Compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act was read by Chair Harelik.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

MINUTES FOR APPROVAL

- May 16, 2023 - Regular Meeting Minutes: A motion was made by Commissioner Foerst to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kobitz. All members present voted in the affirmative with Commissioner Szpond abstaining and Commissioner Varnerin absent.
- May 23, 2023 - Regular Meeting Minutes: A motion was made by Commissioner Foerst to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kobitz. All members present voted in the affirmative with Commissioner Varnerin absent.
- May 30, 2023 - Regular Meeting Minutes: A motion was made by Commissioner Foerst to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kobitz. All members present voted in the affirmative with Commissioner Varnerin absent.
- June 6, 2023 – Regular Meeting Minutes: A motion was made by Commissioner Foerst to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kobitz. All members present voted in the affirmative with Commissioner Varnerin absent.
- June 9, 2023 – Regular Meeting Minutes: A motion was made by Commissioner Foerst to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kobitz. All members present voted in the affirmative with Commissioner Varnerin absent.
- June 13, 2023 – Regular Meeting Minutes: A motion was made by Commissioner Foerst to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kobitz. All members present voted in the affirmative with Commissioner Varnerin absent.
- June 17, 2023 – Regular Meeting Minutes: A motion was made by Commissioner Foerst to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kobitz. All members present voted in the affirmative with Chair Harelik abstaining and Commissioner Varnerin absent.



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- July 11, 2023 – Regular Meeting Minutes: A motion was made by Commissioner Foerst to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kobitz. All members present voted in the affirmative with Commissioner Varnerin absent.
- July 11, 2023 – Executive Session Meeting Minutes: A motion was made by Commissioner Foerst to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kobitz. All members present voted in the affirmative with Commissioner Varnerin absent.

RESOLUTIONS

Ms. DiRado explained that the change in dates to the Board meetings are a result of recently signed legislation (A5175/S3519) which affects the General Election calendar, allowing Boards of Elections to be able to conduct the post-election audits prior to certification.

- Approving updates to the 2023 Union County Board of Elections Meeting Calendar
 - November 19, 2023 at 10:30 (via Zoom) – Audit Batch Drawing
 - November 20, 2023 at 10:30 (via Zoom / In Person) – Conduct Audit
 - November 22, 2023 at 12:00pm (In Person) – Meeting of the Board of County Canvassers

A motion was made by Commissioner Fortunato to accept the changes to the 2023 meeting schedule of the Union County Board of Elections. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Szpond. All Commissioners present voted in the affirmative with Commissioner Varnerin absent.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- New Election Laws: A5176 / S3594 (Election Reporting Requirements): Ms. DiRado explained that the recently signed legislation will allow for a statewide, uniform reporting process of outstanding types of ballots and number of ballots to be counted between election day and certification. The form will be promulgated by the Secretary of State's Office. The Board agrees that while the intent of the legislation is to provide for more transparency in the tally process, the result will ultimately be more confusion as the numbers tend to change as a result of adjudication by the Board. Chair Harelik and Commissioner Foerst noted that the legitimate, nuanced work which happens between each report will likely cause confusion and distrust in the system. Chair Harelik recommended keeping a more detailed report so the numbers could be easily explained.
- ES&S Voting Machines & DS850 Tabulator Firmware Upgrade: Ms. DiRado explained that a new version of the firmware on the ES&S Voting Machines and the DS850s was certified by the state earlier this year and all voting machines, programming desktops, servers and the DS850s will be upgraded prior to the General Election.



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- Ms. DiRado advised the Board of the following updates relative to the Spanish Language Election Program (SLEP):
 - Dr. Elizabeth Ramos, Dean of Union College of Union County, Elizabeth Campus and the ESL Coordinator has agreed to serve on the SLEP Advisory Board. Ms. DiRado asked the Board to assist in recruiting at least two additional Advisory Board members.
 - A media consultant has been engaged to design an animated advertisement for a media buy on Spanish networks. The media buy is for 11 weeks and will start on August 21 and run through November 5.
 - The “poll workers needed” posters have been translated into Spanish and will be distributed to Spanish-speaking establishments (restaurants, grocery stores, etc.)
 - All legal advertisements continue to be translated into Spanish, posted on the County’s website and published in La Voz.
 - Full-color, half page advertisements aimed at recruiting bilingual poll workers have been reserved in La Voz.
 - The Board is working with the Secretary of State’s Office and KnowInk to generate a Hispanic voter file, which is used to create the Hispanic Surname Analysis. The voter file will be the household universe for a countywide recruitment mailing.
 - The Board discussed the merits of translating the subtitles of the poll worker training program for bilingual poll workers. This project will be in place for the General Election.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Szpond to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fortunato. All Commissioners present voted in the affirmative with Commissioner Varnerin absent. The meeting was adjourned at 11:30am.