

MINUTES OF BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS MEETING

March 27, 2023, 2:00PM

201 Central Avenue, 1st Floor Training Room

In Attendance: Baptist Damiano, Bette Meredith, Caryn Cleveland-Short, Richard Birkmeyer, Gene Brendel, Gayle Driver, Solicitor Max Walton, of Conway & Gallagher, and Donna Schwartz.

Not present Marilyn Sheetz and Linda Fiscus.

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Baptist Damiano, seconded by Richard Birkmeyer, to approve the agenda. The motion was carried unanimously 6/0.

2. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Walton stated that the Board of Election was present to hear the Challenge by Richard Jennison regarding the 3-minute time limit on Candidates' Night.

The floor was given to Mr. Richard Jennison who asked if this was being recorded. Mr. Jennison thanked the Board of Supervisors and expressed his concerns over Candidates' Night. He stated he felt it was a conflict of interest for the Board of Election to host Candidates' Night. He said the format is unfair for written questions only, people should be able to walk to the microphone and ask a question. He is also concerned about the moderator. Mr. Jennison believes it is a large community with a stacked vote against him, which is not fair to him. He stated the Town has hurt his opportunity to run as a candidate because of a March 2022 letter they sent out attacking him. He would like an independent moderator. He asked the Board of Elections to consider cancelling the Candidates' Night, saying no one wants an unfair election. The issue of 5-minutes verses 3-minutes is only a difference of 8-minutes.

Ms. Cleveland-Short stated it was unfair to all the other candidates to cancel the Candidates' Night on such short notice. Mr. Jennison said it was unfair to him to have Candidates' Night. He stated there has been no election in six years in district three. He also said the only fair format was to allow questions by microphone.

Ms. Driver asked him what his idea of Candidates' Night was. Mr. Jennison explained.

3. CITIZEN'S PRIVILEGE

Ms. Elaine Cziraky, Ogre Drive, stated that Candidates' Night should not be held based on tradition, there was a time women could not vote. She also noted that writing questions down is not full transparency.

Mr. Walter Curran, October Glory Avenue, stated he agreed with Mr. Jennison that Candidates' Night was unfair in his bias. He said Politics is an American Institution. Mr. Curran said the Board of Election should remain fair and neutral.

Mr. Walton closed the public comment period. He said there are three issues for the Board to consider. 1. To cancel; 2. Independent moderator; and 3. 3-minute or 5-minute opening statements.

4. **DISCUSSION, CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE VOTING**

Mr. Walton informed the Board of Elections that Candidates' Night is not required by code, and this was not a normal appeal. There is nothing to prevent them from having Candidates' Night. They must only treat everyone the same.

A motion was made by Mr. Birkmeyer, seconded by Ms. Driver, to keep candidates' Night on March 29th. The motion was carried unanimously 6/0.

A motion was made by Mr. Damiano, seconded by Mr. Brendel, to approve Ms. Gayle Driver as moderator. The motion was carried unanimously 5/0. Ms. Driver did not vote for herself.

A motion was made by Ms. Cleveland-Short, seconded by Mr. Damiano, to allow people to speak and ask questions. The motion carried 5/1. Ms. Meredith voted against the motion.

A motion was made by Ms. Driver, seconded by Ms. Meredith, to limit the introduction period to three minutes. The motion carried 5/1. Mr. Damiano voted against the motion.

A motion was made by Mr. Damiano, seconded by Ms. Cleveland-Short to extend the introduction time to five minutes. The motion was defeated 5/1. Mr. Damiano voted yes.

5. **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Richard Birkmeyer, seconded by Gene Brendel, to adjourn the meeting at 2:54pm. The motion was carried unanimously 6/0.

Respectfully submitted, Donna M. Schwartz MMC