

# **Election Director Report to the Montgomery County Board of Elections June 29 2020**

## **Election Analysis Primary 2020**

### **Implementation of the Election for Presidential Primary Election 2020**

#### **Staffing**

- March 14<sup>th</sup> Senior Staff meets to discuss election options and develop a plan shared with the Board.
- County orders and implements emergency telework
- Senior staff identified by March 17<sup>th</sup> that the ability to telework while now permissible by the State Board of Elections with off site access to MDVoters but initially was hampered by lack of laptops to provide the staff. Laptops designated for Early Voting were distributed to staff for telework. Staffing guidance provided by County Human Resources.
- Guidance for staffing was in accordance to the Governor's Emergency Proclamation of April 10, 2020 and the County Executive guidance and in accordance to various Union agreements.
- Temporary staff downsized significantly.
- PP items were difficult to acquire initially for staff. Two volunteers need a public acknowledgement of their efforts to keep the Board open for business with the donations of masks for protection.
- Staff members Kera Bumbray and Ryan White are heralded for their fast action in acquiring personal protection items for the staff and the polling places/vote centers and Canvass members.
- Working the plan!

#### **Vote By Mail**

- Adapting to the COVID-19 issues but still providing ballots for the Nursing Home residents to vote.
- Upgrading the Business Reply Permit to improve mail delivery using automation. (ultimately a life saver in hindsight).
- Postage paid return envelopes improved the success of returning mail.
- Outgoing mail and coordination between the General Services Staff and the Absentee staff.

- Coordination within the department between Operations Staff and Absentee staff with high fives to Gilberto Zelaya and Kera Bumbray for their wild rides to Shady Grove Post Office to get all the “change of address” returns that were flipped so new Vote by Mail Ballots delivered before the Saturday’s cut-off time would arrive on the Wednesday prior to the election.
- Coordination between the Recreation Dept. Absentee and Kera Bumbray for all the hand delivery ballots the Thursday, Friday and Saturday prior to Election Day.
- Successful space utilization for Training Rooms 1-2-3 for processing the vote by mail return envelopes.
- Successful training of temporary staff to coordinate the manual intake and sorting of all that mail by Ballot Style and Party.
- Accolades to the Voter Service Section for the successful completion of batching and input of returned ballots as quickly and as accurately as humanly possible. Again, staff performed at near perfection during some very long days.
- Canvass Leads, Michelle, Michael, Amy, Ron, Kara, Gilberto and many others working with the many Canvassers to perform the work necessary to open and unfold the ballots and positive comments from the many Canvass workers for the staff’s never-ending patience, pleasant demeanor and hard work, many compliments were heard by me about the staff working the Canvass Room.
- Provisional Canvas team members processed their items and jumped in to assist everyone in Voter Services to complete the input of returned ballots, which is defined as all ballots returned, accepted, too late and undeliverable returned ballots, all manually

### **Information Technology**

- Staff had just completed the Logic and Accuracy testing and all ballots were delivered to be packed and everything changed.
- IT Staff returned on April 21 to begin again.
- New test decks ordered and again cheers to Ms. Rzeszut for her efforts to get these ballots quickly.
- Plan made to conduct Canvass in a different manner to include preparations that include social distancing.

- IT staff redesigned the Canvass process for all, Board members, Canvass individuals, Scanning Room, the Public and internal staff support.
- Emergency regulations were passed by SBE and IT staff designed Canvass to that standard.
- New plans for Vote Centers were designed in consultation with the Director with COVID – 19 requirements of social distancing.
- IT staff sets up all equipment for Vote Centers to ensure safety of all participants.
- IT staff begins to have difficulties with high speed scanner on May 21<sup>st</sup> and the vendor does not resolve the issue until May 28<sup>th</sup>.
- IT Staff member Lisa Jones deserves credit for working through the problems and identifying the issues related to the non-functioning high speed scanners.
- IT staff works through all issues and is highly methodical in their attention to detail that ultimately contributes to a reconciliation of overall vote off by one between MD Voters and Ballots scanned.

## **Media**

- **Review attachment that was sent earlier this week regarding the efforts of Dr. Zelaya**
- Thank expressed by the State Board of Elections staff regarding the work Gilberto performed to push out the messaging to the Spanish speaking population across the State of Maryland regarding the Vote by Mail method.
- Repeated messaging about verifying that voter registration record is up to date.
- Created new texting for Ballot Drop Boxes
- Developed new Social Media banners related to Vote by Mail and the Drop Boxes.
- Pictograph for distribution
- Facebook presence increased
- Zoom appearances
- Shifting Google ads to start as mail dropped.

## **Operations**

- Shifted their entire operation to coordination of mail outgoing and retrieval from the Rockville branch of the Post Office.

- Ramped up knowledge of postal operations very quickly.
- Persistent and highly competent is staff member Mary Beth Habel who consistently followed up with the many elements of assisting Chris Rzeszut to automate the Postage Paid Business Reply envelope. Need to acknowledge Rick Taylor from General Service for his instrumental role in assisting the department.
- Organization of the Drop Boxes was lead by Chris Rzeszut who coordinated with SBE staff, the Moving Company and Police to get the boxes located so they were under live camera surveillance at all times.
- Chris was responsible for the staffing and daily collection of the drop boxes and all mail and establishing the chain of custody. She trained staff to the need to complete the form correctly and accurately. She additionally had determined based on trends the need and identified and recruited the necessary staff to assist on Election Night the Election Judges assigned to the Drop Boxes for coverage.
- Operations staff and Election Judges were on location at 8:00p.m. at all locations simultaneously to allow all person in line to drop their ballots into the box then properly secure the drop boxes.
- Police were notified of the large crowd at the Silver Spring Vote Center location but after sorting the lines, security was managed on site by the on site Security staff and Eric Rasch as well as Gilberto Zelaya.

### **Board of Elections**

- Required to closed to the public on Election Day
- Alysoun Mclaughlin developed plan for last minute voters and drive-up service. This measure was enhanced by the Cross Guards added to the security complement at the Board of Elections by Operation staff Chris Rzeszut to improve the traffic flow in front of the building.
- Security and Police assisted with traffic at the Board of Elections, Germantown Recreation Center and Activity Center at Bohrer Park.