

MINUTES of the GREB WorkGroup

MAY 11, 2017

The GREB WorkGroup met on Thursday, MAY 11, 2017, at 10 a.m. in Conference Room 18E, McGuireWoods Gateway Plaza, Richmond Virginia.

Present: Co-Chair John Hager, Clara Belle Wheeler, Michele White, Lisa Jeffers, Barbara Gunter, Al Ablowich, Renee Andrews, William Bell and Robin Lind. Kate Hanley joined the meeting by telephone.

Mr. Hager called the meeting to order at 10 am. After taking the roll, he asked newly-appointed members Michele White of Prince William County and Lisa Jeffers of Waynesboro City to give a brief self-introduction.

On a motion by Mr. Ablowich, seconded by Mr. Bell, the minutes were approved as submitted.

Mr. Hager expressed kudos to Mr. Judd for having been able to arrange such an impressive facility for the meeting.

Mr. Lind explained Mr. Howard was unable to attend but had sent comments on the Draft WorkPlan which were distributed.

The chair called for a report on the SBE response to the January 2016 GREB Report. Mr. Lind said he had again sent the report by email to all the SBE members and the Commissioner on April 27 and spoke to the SBE at its May 1 meeting; when he enquired about the absence of any response from SBE or ELECT the Chair apologized that he had received it but been too busy to reply. He added that he would have it placed on the Agenda for their next meeting. The Commissioner did not respond.

Dr. Wheeler said there was no scheduled meeting of the SBE on the calendar but she would call for a meeting as soon as the GREB meeting concluded.

Ms. Hanley characterized a “disconnect” between the SBE and Department of Elections and discussion ensued on various issues currently before the department and board including campaign advertising disclosures, and duplicate transactions on VERIS.

At 10:28 Ms. Hanley excused herself from the telephone connection; she returned at 11 am.

Ms. Gunter said a survey of Directors of Election about their VERIS transactions, conducted by VRAV, was due to be completed on Friday and data could be shared.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the chair asked a committee to form comprised of Ms. Gunter, Mr. Howard, Ms. Jeffers, and Mr. Bell to Define and Focus the Charge and report to the WorkGroup at its next meeting.

On Charge 2, discussion ensued on revising the Annual Evaluation form for Directors of Election and the introducing a Performance Acknowledgement confirmation to be completed by Electoral Board members. Mr. Ablowich said the evaluation of directors of election should concentrate on goals first; the electoral board acknowledgement was not an evaluation but a document that synced up to the Duties and Responsibilities of the office. Dr. Wheeler said the forms should provide hard facts, data, not opinions. The chair asked a committee to form, comprised of Ms. Andrews, Mr. Lind and Ms. White, to prepare draft documents.

Discussion ensued on Charge 3, dealing with implementation of SB 1254 requiring audits of one fifth of the ballot counting scanners in the Commonwealth annually beginning July 1, 2018.

At 11:55 am Ms. Hanley excused herself from the meeting.

The chair suggested meeting with Sen. Mark Obenshain, the bill's author, to discover original intent. Mr. Bell said policies need to be in place to implement it. Several commented on the cost associated with a manual recount of paper ballots.

The chair asked a committee to form comprised of Dr. Wheeler, Mr. Bell and Ms. White to Define and Focus the charge and report back at the next meeting.

Discussion ensued on Charge 4, re-examining the structure of the SBE and ELECT. Several members described unintended consequences of the change which resulted from the creation of the independent post of Commissioner.

Discussion also ensued on the issue of the "State Solution" EPB which puts the Department of Elections in the role of a competitor to commercial vendors. Mr. Lind suggested that might be a separate charge and the chair asked the group to consider if it should be a separate charge.

The group agreed the issue should be considered under the previous 2016 recommendation for a Program Audit of ELECT.

The Chair asked a committee be formed, by Mr. Judd and Mr. Lind to Define and Focus Charge 4 and report back.

Discussion ensued on List Maintenance and Management Issues. Dr. Wheeler said access to the national database of social security numbers is possible. Mr. Lind suggested Mr. Judd, because of his professional expertise, be asked to report on the possibilities and costs of ELECT using that database.

The chair asked a committee to form comprised of Mr. Judd and Mr. Howard to Define and Focus the charge and report back at the next meeting.

Open discussion ensued on several issues among which were revisiting efforts to increase compensation, public notice requirements for hiring of assistant registrars, and uniformity in recruiting officers of election.

The Chair asked for comments for the Good of the Order. Ms. Andrews said she had seen former co-chair Jean Jensen at a Memorial Service for former Del. Jim Scott and had been asked to give her warm regards to members of the WorkGroup.

The WorkGroup set its next meeting for July 13 at 10 am in a location TBA. There being no further business the WorkGroup adjourned at 1:08 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Lind, Temporary Permanent Recording Secretary