

**Minutes of the GREB WorkGroup
August 2, 2018**

McGuireWoods Conference Room, Gateway Plaza

The GREB WorkGroup met at 10 am on August 2, 2018 in the McGuireWoods Conference Room, Gateway Plaza, Richmond, VA.

Present: Co-Chair John Hager, Al Ablowich, William Bell, Barbara Gunter, Lisa Jeffers, Robin Lind, Dr. Clara Belle Wheeler and Michele White. Tracy Howard and Walt Latham attended by teleconference. Also attending: Carol Noggle, representing the League of Women Voters.

Minutes of the June 26 meeting were adopted as amended and corrected.

Discussion ensued on the Risk Limiting Audit held in Fairfax City. Dr. Wheeler expressed appreciation to Ms. White and Messrs Ablowich and Bell and to Stephanie Iles of the City of Norfolk for all the work they put into preparing for the initial Risk Limiting Audit which had been approved by the SBE.

Mr. Latham noted that the JLARC of the Dept of Elections study is nearing completion and is to be released September 10.

Mr. Lind read an email from Chief Legislative Analyst Jamie Bitz which said, in part,

“We're currently in the process of drafting our report, and at some point over the next few weeks we'll provide a copy of the draft to ELECT. That will be their opportunity to fact-check the document and notify us of any substantive concerns with our findings and recommendations. The draft is then finalized and released publicly the morning of September 10. Because we're still in the drafting phase, I can't discuss any of our findings at this point. If there is interest, though, I am certainly happy to come brief the GREB Workgroup on our findings sometime after September 10.”

Mr. Lind said he expected pre-January 2018 and post-January 2018 analysis with recommendations which GREB may want to support.

Mr. Ablowich described the initial work of the Benchmark Index WorkGroup which had its first meeting on July 24, mostly by teleconference. He said the main topic was drafting a project plan which should be evolving over time. The WorkGroup is a public group which will be providing status updates as appropriate. The aim is to provide baselines of performance and establish benchmarks for indices.

Discussion continued and Ms. White said a request should be made for quantifiable measures. Ms. Gunter said positive steps should be measured rather than negative.

Mr. Latham reported on outreach to Circuit Court Judges and Clerks. He said the Chief Justice had passed along the suggestion to an internal group about presenting to a Judicial Conference and perhaps to the State Bar Association. He said it needed follow-up.

Mr. Howard reported on mis-assigned voters. He said GIS system don't always agree with each other. 17 localities do not have GIS systems but paradoxically thus use private contractors who have more modern software programs than some localities which have their own systems. He said there are problems with the boundary between Montgomery and Craig Counties.

Ms. Gunter said she had similar problems. "We've gone to the Courthouse and used actual survey lines, some of which say 'to the crest of the ridge.'"

Mr. Bell said that in Isle of Wight County the John Y. Mason house was built on three county lines., "He eats in one county, entertains in another and sleeps in a third." The General Assembly needs to step in and take authority, he said.

Mr. Howard said the General Assembly needs to compel the counties to establish their lines. It is very necessary, he said. There needs to be an official map.

Dr. Wheeler referred to SB 913, introduced by Sen. Amanda Chase in the 2018 session, and said every locality needs to do it but not every locality has the resources.

Ms. Gunter said the bill put the responsibility on GRs and it should be put on the localities.

Mr. Latham it is another example of the General Assembly saying it is not our problem. "I'm not sure Constitutional Officers have the right to make private agreements."

Dr. Wheeler, Mr. Bell and Ms. White all agreed there needs to be a state authority.

Mr. Latham noted that the Census and GIS boundaries don't line up with actual lines and Mr. Lind pointed out the grammatical contradiction in primary and secondary clauses of §24.2-302.2-B setting existing boundaries against Census lines.

Ms. Jeffers pointed out that Waynesboro, Staunton and Augusta all have GIS systems that are different.

Mr. Hager noted that Sen. Chase's bill already exists and with some changes it might be a bill GREB could support.

On the question of a formal SBE response to the GEB reports of 2016 and 2017 Mr. Lind said SBE Chair James Alcorn had not replied to his emails. Dr. Wheeler said she would follow up.

Discussion then turned to legislative issues. At the request of Co-chair Hager Mr. Lind said he would bring back a summary of previous recommendations at the next meeting.

He said that two initiatives had been introduced, one to give protection to EB members under §24.2-118.1 to prohibit employers from forcing them work on election day, a second to move the Primary date from the second to the third Tuesday in June.

Mr. Ablowich said it did not help in Virginia Beach because schools were usually still in session in the third week of June. Ms. White said that her opinion school should be closed on all election days.

Mr. Hager asked Mr. Lind to confer with Co-chair Kate Hanley on her communications with Superintendents, School Boards and other stakeholders.

Discussion ensued on the problems with DMV voter registrations. Mr. Bell said the "attitude" bothered him and cited the example of an Isle of Wight voter who bought a car from a woman in Newport News and found his voter registration had been transferred to Newport News.

Ms. White said her office processes 12-13,000 NVRA transaction requests a month. Mr. Howard said his voter registration transactions had tripled since January 2016.

Discussion ensued on the continuing need for reform of the State Board of Elections and Co-chair Hager asked that a subcommittee of Dr. Wheeler, Mr. Judd, Mr. Lind and himself continue to focus on the issue.

General discussion ensued on the liaison program at ELECT and Co-chair Hager suggested that Commissioner Piper be invited to attend the next meeting.

The next meeting was set for Tuesday, September 18, 10 am at the McGuireWoods Conference Room in Richmond. The WorkGroup adjourned at 12:40 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robin Lind
Temporary Permanent Recording Secretary