

**Minutes of the GREB WorkGroup
January 15, 2019**

The GREB WorkGroup convened at 10:05 am on January 15, 2019 in the McGuireWoods Conference Room, Gateway Plaza, Richmond ,Va.

Present: John Hager, Kate Hanley, Al Ablowich, Bill Bell, Tracy Howard, Lisa Jeffers, Michele White, Clara Belle Wheeler and Robin Lind. Ms. Andrews attended by telephone.

Attending from the public: Louisa County DoE Cris Watkins, Prince George County EB member Barbara Tabb, Sussex County DoE Bill Jenkins, and League of Women Voters member Carol Noggle.

The minutes of the December 19 meeting were approved as corrected.

Discussion ensued on the general content and layout of the draft Annual Report.

On Charge 1: a Study of Cyber Security measures, Ms. Hanley emphasized that the Commonwealth would have to fund these measures and Mr. Howard suggested that the JLARC Report be recognized as the impetus for this recommendation.

On Charge 2: Compensation for Directors of Election, Mr. Lind provided an amendment requested by Ms. Gunter who was absent. Specific examples were cited of unequal compensation based on gender. He moved, seconded by Ms. Jeffers, the adoption of the amendment with the Appendix to be expanded to show data sorted by Total Compensation, by Supplement Value and by Gender. Adopted unanimously.

On Charge 3: the funding of elections, Mr. Bell suggested that a report by the Virginia Association of Counties on Election Funding be included. Mr. Howard agreed to contact the VaCo for permission to include the data.

On Charge 4: the study of GIS capabilities, Mr. Howard summarized several of the pending bills in the legislature dealing with boundary issues.

Ms. Hanley said splits in House and Senate Districts within jurisdictions is another whole issue. Mr. Hager suggested this might be a good issue for study in the new year.

Mr. Bell pointed out that Federal census blocks do not necessarily agree with county lines.

Somebody has got to be the keeper of the official state boundaries, said Mr. Bell. He said there is some group under VITA with whom this issue would fit.

Maybe we need state GIS help said Ms. Hanley. We need to be clear what the jurisdictional disputes are.

Mr. Bell said he thought all cities and counties should be required, within a certain time frame of perhaps a year, to prove their lines and agree on their lines, and to report those lines to the VITA group and then Legislative Services would be required to use.

The report was amended to reflect the discussion.

On Charge 5: the study of the June Primary date, discussion ensued on specific examples of threats to students in schools and the disruption of voting by mandated lockdowns during crisis when voters are kept both in and out of the polling place.

Mr. Howard said there are at least four bills dealing with the issue currently entered in the General Assembly.

On a motion by Mr. Bell, seconded by Ms. Jeffers, the overall changes in the draft report were adopted unanimously.

Discussion then turned to new charges to be considered in 2019.

Item 1: A Review of the USPS policy for mailing on election days.

Mr. Bell suggested cutting out the post office and allowing localities the option to put up Ballot Drop Boxes. Ms. Hanley suggested a study of late ballots due to postal delivery problems.

Mr. Bell suggested the study be of the role of the Postal System in the Absentee Ballot process.

Ms. Andrews discussed moving back the deadline for requesting Absentee.

Mr. Howard referred to HB 2682, introduced by Del. Mark Sickles, which would allow Absentee Ballots postmarked on or before election day, to be counted if received after the election but before noon on the following Friday.

Ms. Hanley asked if the Ballot Drop Box issues should be rolled into this charge and then tasked Mr. Bell with drafting appropriate language for the charge to be considered at the next meeting.

Item 2: Proposal to seal Registration

Dr. Wheeler and Mr. Howard discussed the issue of voters changing their registration after an Absentee Ballots was issued. Numerous instances occurred in college towns.

Mr. Howard was asked to draft language for the Charge.

Item 3: Maximum size of Precinct

Mr. Bell reported that the 5,000 voter limit originated with a problem in Newport News and explained the current 4,000 voter limit in presidential elections.

Ms. Hanley said the size of the precinct is not the determinant; adding that Fairfax already has 17 precincts with more than 4,000 total voters. Their problem, she said, is finding adequate precinct facilities. Some churches don't want voters and some voters don't want to vote in churches.

Mr. Jenkins said news media have reports on large localities which have a 5-hour long lines and that long lines discourage voting.

Ms. Andrews said the issue was deployment of resources.

Mr. Ablowich said people are talking about changing laws based on inadequate information. The problem must be identified first, he said, and identified three "choke points": Electronic poll books, voting booths, tabulator time. Standards of quality are needed: how long is an acceptable wait? Understand what the data is and determine the best practices.

Mr. Ablowich moved, seconded by Ms. Andrews that the charge be :

Review resources required to provide efficient administration of elections at the precinct level, including but not limited to ballot tabulators, electronic poll books, number of voters and officers of election, and ballot content and style. Adopted unanimously.

Ms. Andrews suggested a discussion of early voting, no excuse absentee voting, and other bills under consideration. Ms. Hanley suggested holding it in abeyance until the session concludes and the legislation is clear.

Mr. Hager suggested that unresolved issues from 2017 and 2018 should be carried over and reconsidered.

Mr. Hager noted the resignation of Mr. Judd in August and suggested two new members to fill out the WorkGroup. He then nominated Barbara Tabb, EB secretary of Prince George County, and Director of Elections Dianna Moorman of James City County, seconded by Renee Andrews.

Discussion ensued and Mr. Bell moved that the nominations be tabled until the following meeting, seconded by Mr. Howard, open to further nominations. Adopted unanimously.

The board agreed to meet next on February 26 at 10 am. The meeting adjourned at 12:21 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robin Lind,
Temporary Permanent Recording Secretary