

## General Registrar's & Electoral Board Workgroup

1 Minutes

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4 The meeting was called to order on January 20, 2015, at 2:00PM by Co-Chair John  
5 Hager. Attending were Jean Jensen, Co-Chair; electoral board (EBs) members  
6 William Bell, Renee Andrews, Bill Thomas, and Robin Lind; general registrar's (GRs)  
7 Larry Haake, and Barbara Gunter. Representing SBE was Chairman Charles E. Judd  
8 and the Department of Elections (ELECT) was represented by ELECT Liaison Rose  
9 Mansfield; Martha Brissette, ELECT Policy Analyst, and members of the public.

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11 Co-Chair Hager submitted the GREB Workgroup Minutes for approval from the  
12 December 3, 2014 meeting to the members. There were no additions and or  
13 deletions noted to the Minutes. Co-Chair Jensen *moved that the Minutes be approved*  
14 *as submitted*. Mr. Bell seconded the motion and the GREB Workgroup Members  
15 unanimously approved the minutes.

16  
17 The first order of business was a report from committee members. Co-Chair Hager  
18 stated that the focus of the meeting would be the agenda for the year 2015. Mr.  
19 Haake reported that in response to a request for the fiscal impact of the salary  
20 adjustments, to compensate the general registrars at the same rate as the  
21 treasurer's in their localities, the projected cost would be 3.5 million dollars  
22 annually. Co-Chair Hager stated that after receiving input from other sources that  
23 the focus of the GREB Workgroup should be to receive reimbursements for the  
24 expenses that the general registers incur that are not currently funded. Co-Chair  
25 Jensen noted that the legislation has moved forward that includes the description of  
26 duties and the title of the general registrar but, does not include the monies. Co-  
27 Chair Jensen thanked SBE Chairman Judd for his work with the Privileges &  
28 Elections Committees for his efforts and for receiving this guidance. Chairman Judd  
29 provided a summary of the communications and the legislation covering the focus of  
30 the GREB Workgroup.

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32 The seconded order of business was the Legislative Initiatives. Co-Chair Jensen  
33 suggested that all members of the GREB Workgroup Members attend all the  
34 meetings of the sub-committees and committees handling the legislation presented  
35 by the workgroup. Co-Chair Hager discussed the meetings in both general assembly  
36 houses and discussion among workgroup members perused on the dynamics of  
37 each of the committees as it related to the legislation presented by the GREB  
38 Workgroup. Chairman Judd, Larry Haake, and Robin Lind committed to attending  
39 the committee meetings and providing the members an update via email during  
40 session regarding the workgroups legislation. Co-Chair Hager asked Mr. Lind to  
41 provide a report to workgroup members on the past committee meetings. Mr. Lind  
42 provided a detail report of all committee's meetings and their resolve.

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44 The next order of business was the GREB Workgroup Directives for year 2015. Co-  
45 Chair Jensen stated that the workgroup should outline the focus for the upcoming

46 year as it correlates to the resolution requiring a final report by December 31, 2015.  
47 Co-Chair Jensen restated the resolution before the members.

- 48
- 49 1. Work with the appropriate authority in the implementation of the
- 50 recommendations contained herein;
- 51 2. Further evaluate the roles and responsibilities of Electoral Board members to
- 52 make certain their historically important role of checks and balances is
- 53 maintained and emphasized;
- 54 3. Examine and recommend state funding mechanisms for voter registration
- 55 and elections for the localities;
- 56 4. Evaluate staffing of the general registrar's offices;
- 57 5. Established standards for continuing education needs and recognition for
- 58 advanced studies; and
- 59 6. Analyze and review minimum funding and staffing levels of the Department
- 60 of Elections to ensure a robust, efficient and responsive agency capable of
- 61 conscientiously serving the more than 5 million voters in the Commonwealth
- 62 today.
- 63 7. Study other areas as deemed necessary.
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66 Chairman Judd stated that in consultation with the Department of Elections (ELECT)  
67 that the issue of when special elections are conducted should be address by the  
68 GREB Workgroup. Mr. Haake stated that data extracted from the workgroup survey  
69 address this concern and suggested that this issue would fall under items three &  
70 four of the resolution. Chairman Judd stated that setting special elections in specific  
71 months would help manage the costs associated to conducting special elections and  
72 primaries. Co-Chair Jensen directed Mr. Haake to provide a review of the survey  
73 results. Mr. Haake stated that the voting machines responsibilities, Logic & Accuracy  
74 Testing, the purchasing of the equipment, and other issues related to equipment  
75 were the main topic that needs revisiting. The first survey visited the issues of  
76 staffing and Election Day expenses. Co-Chair Jensen stated that the workgroup  
77 would add this issue, special elections, to the list of activities for the workgroup.

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79 Co-Chair Jensen stated that the manner in which electoral board members are  
80 appointed should be reviewed as it relates to resolution item number two. Co-Chair  
81 Jensen asked for a consensus of whether workgroup members would be  
82 comfortable with adding a review of the selection process of electoral board  
83 members and GREB Workgroup Members unanimously stated that they were in  
84 agreement. Mr. Haake stated that this item would be encompassed under item  
85 number two.

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87 Co-Chair Jensen stated that resolution item three: "Examine and recommend state  
88 funding mechanisms for voter registration and elections for the localities" would  
89 require a survey that would provide statics to the workgroup. Mr. Bell stated that  
90 the materials required to conduct an election are generated at the locality rather in

91 days past where materials were sent from the Department of Elections. Mr. Bell  
92 stated that this was an example of lack of funding from the state.

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94 Co-Chair Jensen stated that resolution item four: "Evaluate staffing of the general  
95 registrar's offices" needed reviewing. Barbara Gunter stated that at a previous GREB  
96 Workgroup Meeting a request was made to summarize a review of this resolution  
97 item. Ms. Gunter provided the members with document outlaying the findings of the  
98 review and discussion pursued. Ms. Gunter stated that a priority should be to make  
99 all part-time general registers full-time employees which would provide uniformity  
100 across the state as far as it relates to providing services to the voters of the  
101 commonwealth. Ms. Gunter stated that the code requirements for the position of  
102 assistant general register should also be reviewed. The recent attorney generals'  
103 opinion on whether it is permitted to bring in temporary staff as deemed necessary  
104 by the general register during high volume election activity and requirements which  
105 would be supported by the locality. The staffing levels based on population should  
106 also be reviewed. Co-Chair Jensen instructed members to review the document  
107 before the next workgroup meeting.

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109 Co-Chair Jensen stated that resolution item five: "Established standards for  
110 continuing education needs and recognition for advanced studies" needed  
111 reviewing. Mr. Haake stated that this item was written with the certification  
112 program in consideration. Co-Chair Jensen asked how this standard could be  
113 mirrored to the training and certification of electoral board members. Mr. Haake  
114 stated a program could be developed. Co-Chair Jensen stated that the quality and the  
115 timing of the training are of most importance. Discussion pursued on the varying  
116 levels of training across the commonwealth. Mr. Haake stated that there was data  
117 compiled that was generated from the survey. Co-Chair Jensen suggested that the  
118 workgroup should establish the entity that would review the electoral board  
119 members as the general registers are reviewed by their electoral board. Renee  
120 Andrews stated that there should be recognition for the general register who  
121 receives an advance degree. Ms. Gunter stated that the electoral board members  
122 have been invited to attend the VRO classes. There has been discussion about  
123 continuing the education through the general registrars association or through an  
124 entity of higher education.

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126 Martha Brissette, ELECT Policy Analyst, suggested that the workgroup make  
127 contact with Terry Wagoner who is leading the training program at ELECT. Ms.  
128 Wagoner is conducting a workgroup that is revisiting the content of the annual  
129 training. Ms. Brissette suggested that Ms. Wagoner was available to discuss and  
130 answer questions about training during the current workgroup session. Ms.  
131 Wagoner was introduced to the workgroup, answered questions, and offered her  
132 assistance.

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134 Co-Chair Jensen stated that resolution item six: "Analyze and review minimum  
135 funding and staffing levels of the Department of Elections to ensure a robust,  
136 efficient and responsive agency capable of conscientiously serving the more than 5

137 million voters in the Commonwealth today” needed reviewing. Co-Chair Jensen  
138 stated that staffing levels should be reviewed noting the number of positions at the  
139 polling locations.

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141 Co-Chair Hager stated that the seven resolution items were meant to be a guide for  
142 the GREB Workgroup. Chairman Judd stated that the process of submitting names  
143 for electoral board assignments should be reviewed. The role of the electoral board  
144 member should be defined at the minimum level. Co-Chair Jensen stated that it is  
145 important to assess the appointment process because of the diversity in the  
146 commonwealth. The responsibility of electoral board members has grown and has  
147 been underestimated over the years. Mr. Haake stated that the survey data details  
148 the job description. The job description could be provided to the judge to help them  
149 with the selection process. The workgroup agreed that a job description should be  
150 developed for the electoral board members. The list of responsibilities and duties  
151 should be our guide.

152

153 Co-Chair Hager stated that an agenda for the next meeting should be established to  
154 ensure the productivity and the achievement of workgroup goals. The following  
155 items were suggested:

156 ✓ Under resolution # two- The appointment process of electoral board  
157 members.

158 ✓ Under resolution # three- The scheduling of special elections

159 ✓ Under resolution # five – Continuing education needs of GR’s & EB’s.

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162 Co-Chair Jensen inquired if there were additional reports and there were none. The  
163 workgroup floor was opened to public discussion. General public comments were  
164 provided by audience members on varying subject matter.

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166 Co-Chair Hager asked if there were any further comments and there were none. Mr.  
167 Lind moved *that the workgroup adjourn*. Ms. Andrews seconded the motion and the  
168 workgroup unanimously approved the motion.

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170 The next meeting of the GREB Workgroup is set for March 17, 2015 at 1:00 PM at  
171 the General Assembly Building, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor West Conference Room, Richmond,  
172 Virginia.

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174 There being no further business, the GREB Workgroup adjourned at 4:00PM.

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Co-Chair Jean Jensen

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Co-Chair John Hager