

New Castle City Board of Elections
Minutes
September 28, 2023 – 6:30 p.m.
1 Municipal Boulevard

Members Present: Rodney Pratt
Carolyn Travers
Connie Reese
Adrienne Indellini

Absent: Marianne Caven, Chair

Also Present: Diane Delgado, City Absentee Ballot Clerk

In Ms. Caven's absence, Mr. Pratt called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. Roll call followed and a quorum to conduct business was declared.

Mr. Pratt introduced Ms. Indellini as a new member of the Board of Elections. Ms. Indellini expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to serve on the Board.

Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes of the March 15, 2023 and July 19, 2023 meetings as presented was made, seconded and unanimously carried.

General Discussion of November 4, 2023 Special Election Needs and Procedures

Mr. Pratt reported the following:

- A question was raised at the July 19th meeting regarding City Council not voting on an Ordinance to determine how candidates would file. It was shared to the Board that the City Council was advised that the best way to clarify those needs was via a City Ordinance. An Ordinance was drafted and Council's decision to not act on it was not the result of any advice from the Board of Elections. The needs were handled prior to the August special election without an Ordinance being voted on.
- The Application for the voting machines has been submitted.
- The Agreement with the County for Election Services has been submitted.
- The Contract for training with the County has been submitted and the Board is waiting for confirmation on the options in the week prior to the November 4th Special Election to share with the Board and poll workers.
- Mr. Pratt has secured six poll workers. Poll workers will be required to be at the polls from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
- The Voter Registration List has been updated and is available to the candidates. Requests for the list can be made through the Board of Elections or by contacting Diane Delgado in the City Office.
- Due to a conflict with the Senior Center's schedule, the election will be held at the Good Will Fire Company. Ms. Caven met Chief Majewski and inspected the space.
- Set-up of the election space will be completed by Good Will staff the morning of November 4th.
- The deadline for candidates to file has passed.

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- One candidate is on the Ballot for City Council President, Suzanne Souder. Ms. Souder may be appointed prior to the election, and if so, she would not be on Ballot on election day.
- Two candidates are on the Ballot for the open seat on City Council: Brian Mattaway and Alice Riehl.

Regarding Absentee Ballots, Ms. Delgado stated the Notice of Election will be put up prior to October 13th. Absentee Ballot notification will be posted prior to October 9th.

Mr. Pratt explained the needs of the election for Ms. Indellini's benefit (posters, voting machines, catering for the poll workers, etc.). Ms. Delgado will have the election supplies available for inspection.

Mr. Pratt received a question about signage that he will pass on to Ms. Caven for review at a future meeting.

Public Comment

Diane Delgado, Absentee Ballot Clerk

Ms. Delgado informed the Board that the City Solicitor has advised that the State Code is clear that if the number of qualified candidates for an office is equal to or less than the number of seats for the election, the Board of Elections shall declare the candidate or candidates elected. The Board of Elections has an administrative duty to declare Suzanne Souder elected under the State Elections Code. This item should be added to the next Agenda.

Phil Gross – 1301 13th Street

Mr. Gross asserted that Mr. Pratt's behavior is unacceptable. He alleged that Mr. Pratt made comments that violated a direction made by Ms. Caven as Board Chair regarding campaigning. He asserted that Mr. Pratt made comments to various individuals and on social media during the election that "prodded them toward a particular candidate." Mr. Gross asserted that Mr. Pratt's relationship with a particular candidate should have been severed during the campaign but that Mr. Pratt chose not to do so.

Mr. Gross opined that Mr. Pratt should step down from the Board of Elections. Mr. Gross went on to state that if Mr. Pratt does not step down within the next seven days a formal petition will be made and submitted to the City of New Castle and the State Board of Elections.

Dr. Somasunderam Padmalingam

Dr. Padmalingam expressed concern with a lack of togetherness in the New Castle community.

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Dr. Padmalingam offered these words of wisdom to foster togetherness:

Honesty
Respect
Responsibility
Trust
Caring
Sharing

Frank
Faith
Family
Friendly
Fairness

There being no further business to discuss, Mr. Pratt called for a motion to adjourn.

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and unanimously carried and the meeting adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen R. Weirich
City Stenographer