



The **January 11, 2023** organizational meeting of the Rockingham County Electoral Board was called to order at 10:08 a.m. by Director of Elections Lisa B. Gooden and was held in the Registrar's Office Annex, 20 East Gay Street, Harrisonburg. Sandra Parks suggested a 90-minute time limit for the meeting.

**Election of Officers for the Electoral Board:** A motion was made by Susan Threewitts, seconded by Rebecca Ruckman, and unanimously carried, to elect members of the board to the following positions:

Sandra Parks – Chair  
Rebecca Ruckman -- Vice Chair  
Susan C. Threewitts – Secretary

**Minutes:** A motion was made by Susan Threewitts, seconded by Sandra Parks, and unanimously carried, to approve the minutes of the December 13, 2022 as presented.

**Staff Report from Director of Elections:**

**Meeting with Local Legislators and Legislative Aides:** Lisa Gooden mentioned that she and Directors of Elections for the City of Harrisonburg and City of Waynesboro, met with Senator Mark Obenshain, Delegate Tony Wilt, and their legislative aides (Jennifer Aulgur and Chad Funkhouser), and Jeffrey Walters, legislative aide for Delegate Todd Gilbert on December 21, to provide stats and share concerns about the administration of elections. Specifically, concerns regarding in the substantial increase provisional ballots due to the implementation of Same Day Registration (SDR) and the strain it caused on election officers on Election Day. Information presented for Rockingham included:

**Rockingham County Stats:**

1 FT Director of Elections/GR  
1 FT Deputy Director (county funded)  
1 PT Assistant (who is currently on maternity leave)

4-6 Part-time Election Officers (work as needed during elections)

1 FT Deputy (requested by Electoral Board in 2022 – to be discussed again in 2023 with county officials)

**Challenges:**

Very limited staff

Loss of EXPERIENCED Election Officer

Increasing demands (Same Day Registration, Preregistration of 16-year-olds, disgruntled voters, maintaining election integrity and RESPECT by voters, waiting for completion of new voter registration system)

Recent Legislative Changes such as **Same Day Registration (SDR)** – effective October 2022 has caused a significant increase in the workload for Voter Registration offices AND, most notably, for the election officials serving on Election Day.

A tipping point has been reached and the legislators are strongly urged to consider additional funding for elections and additional funding for full time staff (Deputy Directors of Elections).

**Rockingham County's statistics from November 2022 compared to November 2018 include:**

**IN PERSON VOTING: 804.52% increase** from 530 (2018) to 4,794 (2022)

**REGISTERED VOTERS: 11.83% increase** from 50,567 (2018) to 56,551 (2022)

**VOTING BY MAIL: 466.89% increase** from 299 (2018) to 1,695 (2022)

**PROVISIONAL BALLOTS: 1,171% increase** from 14 (2018) to 178 (2022)

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**November 2022 Election Challenges** also included two late drops of Online Voter Registration applications by ELECT (applications through DMV) weeks prior to the election. For Rockingham, this amounted to approximately 1,600 voter registrations being processed at the eleventh hour. Many of these OVRs were dated in May and June, 6-7 months after individuals registered through DMV!

There were also multiple occasions when **VERIS** was 'down' during the 45-day in person voting timeframe. This certainly caused issues/delays for all localities.

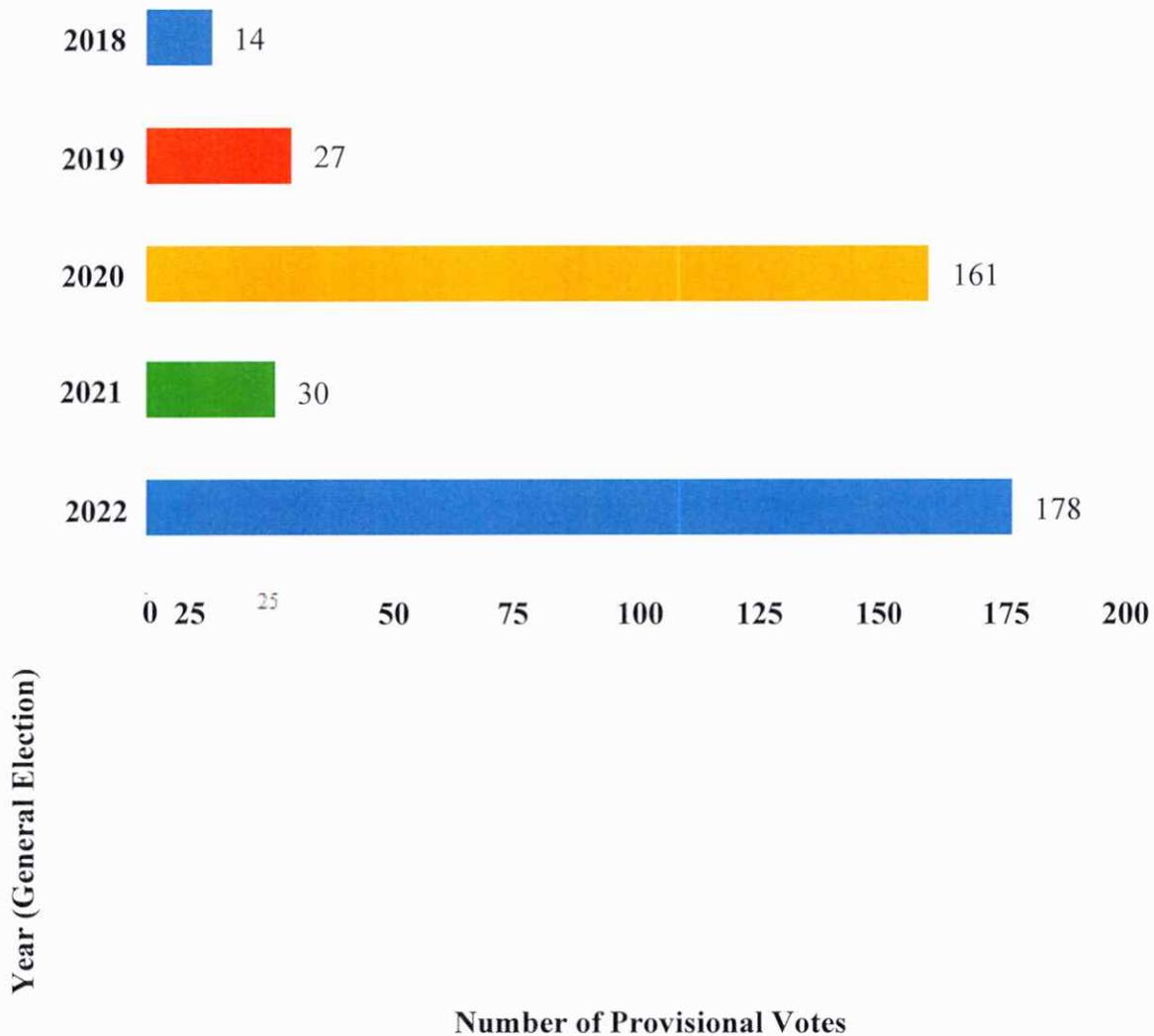
Reports through **VERIS** – it took **4.5 hours to generate** a report at the close of in person voting. It included information needed for Election Day.

**Election Officer Retention** is an ongoing concern (see survey from Chief at one of our precincts). Electoral Boards/Directors of Elections are doing all they can to recruit and, especially, retain experienced officers. Local boards have increased pay for these officers in

many localities, but this may not be enough to retain experienced officers for the 15+ hour workday.

**Post-Election 2022:** An ELECT advisory dated December 9, 2022 notified localities that list maintenance data audits in preparations for the new voter registration system were not populated into locality hoppers. This resulted in 95 felon records for Rockingham County alone.

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Lisa mentioned that the legislators seemed very concerned and indicated that they would be mindful of these items as the General Assembly session approaches and further discussion is held at that level.

**Registrant Count:** Lisa provided members with the Registrant Counts by Locality which reflected a total of 56,789 voters.

**Electoral Board Job Description:** Lisa said ELECT recently provided a detailed job description for Electoral Board members, and members briefly reviewed the following:

**Electoral Board Job Description Summary:** The Electoral Board of each County and City in Virginia is made up of three members who serve three-year staggered terms. Two members are members of the political party of the most recently elected governor. The chair and secretary must represent different political parties unless the position is declined. Although the bipartisan board is appointed by the Circuit Court based upon local party recommendations, each member must carry out official duties in a nonpartisan manner. The authority for the administration of many aspects of elections for the locality remains with the Electoral Board, including oversight of the General Registrar/Director of Elections, and is responsible to the State Board of Elections for that administration. It appoints the General Registrar, who handles voter records. Generally, the work of the Electoral Board should be shared equally by all three members, although the Secretary has additional responsibilities. I. Responsibilities:

A. Election administration includes:

1. Approval of voting equipment to be used, and development and approval of a security plan to keep all equipment and materials secure.
2. Ensure the creation, production, and proper custody of ballots.
3. Ensure the proper conduct of Logic and Accuracy (L&A) test to be sure equipment is programmed correctly for each election.
4. Assist in conducting absentee voting when requested by the Director of Elections.
5. Appointment of officers of election and ensuring that training, assignment, and review of precinct officers of election occurs.
6. Ensure coordination with other local government departments (e.g., police, sheriff, public works, IT, schools) to ensure smooth conduct of each election.
7. Assistance in procuring, packing, and delivering supplies to polling places.
8. Ensure proper setup of polling places prior to each election.
9. Assistance in polling places and offices as needed on Election Day. Availability to respond to inquiries from media, voters and political parties.
10. Conduct of post-election canvass to ascertain that all precinct results are accurate and complete.
11. Based on input from the General Registrar, determination of validity and counting of provisional ballots.
12. The Electoral Board's signatures on the certification of results following the canvass is the ultimate declaration of the truth, accuracy and dependability of the vote totals being submitted to the

Commonwealth and is thus the foundation of the democratic process.

**B. The Electoral Board has additional responsibilities, including:**

1. Appointment, removal and annual performance evaluation of General Registrar.
2. Certification of candidates, when required.
3. Conduct of meetings in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).
4. Familiarity with federal and state laws that must be followed in conducting elections.
5. Attendance at training programs provided by Virginia Department of Elections (ELECT).
6. Together with the General Registrar, administration of the Office of Elections, including budgeting and dealing with local government officials, as needed.
7. The Secretary of the Electoral Board has specific tasks and responsibilities according to the Code and must take and keep accurate minutes of all board meetings.

**Electoral Board Activity Prohibitions:**

- A. May not collect any fee as a notary during the time of such appointment.
- B. May not engage in political activities when performing official duties.
- C. May not solicit signatures for candidate petitions in a public building.

**I. Qualifications:**

The following qualification is required by law:

- Must be a qualified voter of the County or City, in good legal standing.

**I. Disqualifications:**

- A. Must not be directly related to another Electoral Board member or General Registrar or to a candidate or holder of elected office.
- B. May not serve as chair of a political party, at local, district or state level, and may not hold elected office or offer to be a candidate for elected office
- C. May not be employed by or hold incompatible office under federal, state or local government (ELECT will provide a list of incompatible offices)

**Additional desirable characteristics:**

- A. Customer-service orientation in dealing with voters.
- B. Computer literacy, as much business is conducted via email.
- C. Ability to travel around the County or City.
- D. Public speaking ability to conduct training or address groups.
- E. Writing ability to write training materials, legislative positions, or analyses.
- F. Basic budgeting skills.
- G. Knowledge of basic legal concepts and judicial proceedings; willingness to become deeply familiar with United States Code Title 52 and Virginia Code Title 24.2 governing Elections and administrative regulations thereunder.
- H. Assertive manner when needed to enforce compliance with code or regulations.

**Conditions:**

Service on the Electoral Board is a year-round obligation. There is a general election every year in November and a primary election most years in June. In addition, there may be City or Town elections in May and special elections whenever called. From six to two weeks prior to each election, the board may need to be available a few times per week for a few hours. The week prior to and the week of the election, the board needs to be available most of the time, including 5am-10pm or later on Election Day. At other times the board may meet monthly and may attend training or networking meetings or conferences. Members may be asked to address local groups or attend meetings of interest.

**FY 2023-24 Budget Items:** Lisa noted that the budget requests (Electoral Board and Registrar) were submitted to the Finance Director on Friday, January 6, and included voting machine upgrades as directed by the Board. She also mentioned that a request for a new conference tables and chairs for the Registrar's Office and the Registrar's Office Annex were included, as well as reaffirming the need for another full time Deputy (as approved by the EB in January, 2022).

**Candidate Filings for November 7, 2023 General Election:** Lisa apprised members that she and Nick have been very busy answering questions and processing candidate documents for the upcoming year. So far, she said one candidate (Hollie Cave) has qualified to run for the District 5 School Board seat. She said other inquiries have included: Broadway Town Council, District 4 School Board (2 individuals), District 4 Board of Supervisors (3 individuals), District 5 Board of Supervisors (1 individual); and Commonwealth's Attorney (1 individual).

**Annual Security Plan Review:** Lisa reminded members of the upcoming meeting with Terri Perry (Director of Technology) and Michael Bowen (Deputy Director of Technology) on Monday, January 30 at 10 AM, for the Annual Security Plan Review. This will be a closed session due to the nature of the discussion.

**Deputy Director of Elections Report:** The following items were reported by Nick Ocampo:

**Volunteers for Equipment Distribution for Future Elections:** Nick mentioned that he has some great connections with his former place of employment (JMU Marketing Department) and that he felt certain he could

gather volunteers (softball players) to assist with the distribution of equipment and supplies when chiefs come to pick up items the day before the election (as recommended by the Electoral Board). He said the November timeframe is a bit less hectic for the team and that they are always looking for volunteer opportunities. It was mentioned that these individuals would be administered an oath prior to assisting.

**Election Day Reporting from Precincts:** Nick mentioned that he has been working on a more 'user friendly' method for Chiefs to report election results from their respective precincts on Election Day. He discussed the differences between the previous method and the new one. He explained that the link to officers will be provided via email.

Board members expressed that this should be a positive change.

**Adjourn:** A motion was made by Rebecca Ruckman, seconded by Sandra Parks, and unanimously carried, to adjourn the meeting at 11:16 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan C. Threewitts". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name of the signatory.

Susan C. Threewitts, Secretary