

Norfolk Electoral Board

Minutes of the April 1, 2025 Board Meeting

Present:

Ms. Atoy Carrington (Chairwoman), Ms. Marianne McKay (Vice-Chairwoman), Mr. H. Michael Ziegenfuss (Secretary), Ms. Stephanie Iles (Director of Elections & General Registrar), Ms. Rosanna Bencoach (Deputy Director of Elections & Deputy Registrar), and members of the public – Raymarie Rowzie, Tony S. Olcott, Mark E. Snell-Cook, Scott W. Hancox, Arthur W. Devine, Jr., Dr. Frederick Rochte, Judith Brown, Michael Morra, and representatives from the Norfolk Commonwealth’s Attorney’s and City Attorney’s offices were in attendance.

The Norfolk Electoral Board was called to order on Tuesday April 1, 2025, at: 11:02 a.m. by Ms. Atoy Carrington in the Norfolk Office of Elections.

A motion to approve the minutes from the March 4, 2025 meeting was made by Ms. McKay and seconded by Mr. Ziegenfuss. The motion was passed unanimously by the Board.

Ms. Iles advised that both candidates for Norfolk Commonwealth’s Attorney filed their paperwork with the Democratic Party Chair at the same time. State law requires the local Electoral Board to determine the ballot order for local offices when this occurs. The Board conducted the ballot order lot drawing for the Norfolk Commonwealth’s Attorney’s race. Each candidate’s name was placed in a canister and sealed. The canisters were shaken within a transparent bowl. Chairwoman Carrington made the first selection, followed by Secretary Ziegenfuss. The ballot order for this race to be held with the June 17, 2025 Democratic Party Primary Election was determined as follows:

John F. Butler
Ramin Fatehi

Ms. Iles provided an update of potential polling place relocations. The renovations to Larchmont Library have been postponed. We will be voting at this location in June. Calvary Revival Church is no longer available to serve as a polling place. There will be a public hearing and City Council vote on April 8th at 6:00 p.m. regarding the Norfolk Electoral Board’s Ordinance request to relocate the polling place to Aldersgate United Methodist Church. Public comment will be accepted in the Norfolk Office of Elections through April 4th close of business.

Ms. Iles provided a legislative update on election-related bills within the Virginia General Assembly this session.

Secretary Ziegenfuss gave a brief update on the Virginia Electoral Board Association (VEBA) Annual Convention. He noted that VEBA celebrated 50 years as the Statewide Electoral Board Association. Mr. Ziegenfuss was appointed to be VEBA Tidewater District Director, finishing Ms. Pam Legare's term. Training and networking with other board members from other localities is helpful and makes us better able to serve as Electoral Board members in Norfolk.

The next meeting of the Norfolk Electoral Board was set for Tuesday, May 6, 2025 at 11:00 a.m. Location is to be determined as early voting begins in the Norfolk Office of Elections on May 2nd.

Such Other business as may come before the Electoral Board:

The Board listened to comments from members of the public. Mr. Devine inquired about FOIA exemptions (local versus state). Mr. Hancox asked about the President's Executive Order impacting voter registration and Federal elections as it pertains to Virginia and the City of Norfolk.

Vice Chair McKay requested all Officers of Election be provided with printed training materials. Ms. McKay indicated that there is conflict with training regarding Authorized Representatives. Ms. Iles disagreed and advised she will highlight this subject matter in future training.

Closed Session

At 12:22 p.m., it was moved by Mr. Ziegenfuss and seconded by Ms. McKay to go into closed session pursuant to the Code of Virginia for a discussion of personnel – potential Officers of Election for appointment. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote of the Board.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Ziegenfuss and seconded by Ms. McKay and passed by unanimous vote of the Norfolk Electoral Board, the Electoral Board reconvened in open session. Furthermore, at 12:25 p.m. Mr. Ziegenfuss moved to adopt the following certification:

"We certify that the Norfolk Electoral Board convened a closed meeting on April 1, 2025, pursuant to an affirmative vote in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and that Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by this Board that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law. The Norfolk Electoral Board further certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered by the Board in the closed meeting."

Ms. Carrington seconded the adoption of the certification, and the Board voted to approve the certification by unanimous vote.

Mr. Ziegenfuss motioned to approve the nine (9) applicants presented by Ms. Iles to serve as Officers of Election for a period ending February 28, 2027. Ms. McKay seconded. The motion passed the Board unanimously.

At 12:30 p.m., it was moved by Mr. Ziegenfuss and seconded by Ms. McKay to go into a closed session pursuant to the Code of Virginia for a discussion of personnel – November 2024 Election Day feedback provided by Officers of Election. The motion was approved by a 2 to 1 vote of the Board with Ms. McKay abstaining. Mr. Ziegenfuss voted Yea, Ms. Carington voted Yea, and Ms. McKay abstained.

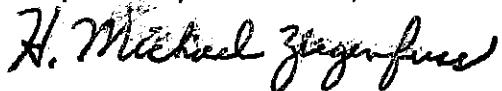
Upon a motion made by Mr. Ziegenfuss and seconded by Ms. McKay and passed by unanimous vote of the Norfolk Electoral Board, the Electoral Board reconvened in open session. Furthermore, at 1:14 p.m. Mr. Ziegenfuss moved to adopt the following certification:

"We certify that the Norfolk Electoral Board convened a closed meeting on April 1, 2025, pursuant to an affirmative vote in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and that Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by this Board that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law. The Norfolk Electoral Board further certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered by the Board in the closed meeting."

Ms. Carrington seconded the adoption of the certification, and the Board voted by roll call to approve the certification by a 2 to 1 vote with Ms. McKay dissenting. Ms. Carrington voted Yea. Mr. Ziegenfuss voted Yea. Ms. McKay voted Nay because she wanted specific individuals' names for evaluation.

Mr. Ziegenfuss moved to adjourn the meeting, which Ms. Carrington seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 1:18 p.m. by a unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. Michael Ziegenfuss".

Mr. Ziegenfuss, Secretary

April 1, 2025