

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE COCHISE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
WORK SESSION HELD ON
Tuesday, December 6, 2016**

A work session of the Cochise County Board of Supervisors was held on Tuesday, December 6, 2016 at 1:00 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors' Executive Conference Room, 1415 Melody Lane, Building G, Bisbee, Arizona.

Present: Richard R. Searle, Chairman; Patrick G. Call, Vice-Chairman; Ann English, Member

Staff Present: James E. Vlahovich, County Administrator
Edward T. Gilligan, Deputy County Administrator
Britt W. Hanson, Chief Civil Deputy County Attorney
Arlethe G. Rios, Clerk of the Board
Katie Howard, Elections & Special Districts Director
Christine Rhodes, County Recorder
Sylvia Gruhn, Deputy County Recorder

Attendees: Eric Peterman
Pat Fleming
Bob Fleming
Joe Casey
David Raber
Martha Rodriquez
Heather Lopez
Chuck Alton
Margo Macartney
Helise Dubnick
David Penrose

Chairman Searle called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

ANY ITEM ON THIS AGENDA IS OPEN FOR DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

THE ORDER OR DELETION OF ANY ITEM ON THIS AGENDA IS SUBJECT TO MODIFICATION AT THE MEETING

INTRODUCTIONS

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Board of Supervisors

1. Discussion regarding the General Election held on November 8, 2016.

Chairman Searle had everyone introduce themselves.

Mr. Vlahovich said that Ms. Howard would brief the Board on issues that occurred during the November 8 election.

Ms. Howard provided a seven page report to the Board and went over details of why she was hired and the topics that she had focused on. She noted that there had been no instances of incorrect results and no inaccuracies in any of the elections since 2014. She said that there had been issues with the elections, but said that there were many changes made to make the entire process more efficient.

She moved on to specific issues that occurred during the general election.

She noted that two machines become unusable during the day, but the major issue with long lines was the time spent by voters voting their ballot.

She stated that projections on voter turnout were not accurate because of the amount of early voters that showed up at the polls and then had to vote a provisional ballot. She apologized for wait times and said that staff was working to make this process more efficient. She added that machine wait times were also off due to the fact that many people were not familiar with the machines and those that were took more than the projected time to vote their ballots.

Chairman Searle said that in his district citizens experienced people taking 15-20 minutes to vote their ballots as well as the complexity of the ballots and voters had not being familiar with all races on the ballot.

Supervisor English said that the program itself was not as intuitive as expected.

Ms. Gruhn said that she agreed with Supervisor English due to the fact that her staff had assisted all 870 voters who voted at the Recorder's Office on how to use the machines.

Ms. Howard noted that proper signage was not available at most places to assist with directing voters.

Chairman Searle asked about the application that allowed citizens to vote on their phone.

Ms. Howard said that the application was available and that she recommended it be used for the next election cycle.

She moved on to insufficient ballot stock.

Chairman Searle asked how staff calculated ballot stock.

Ms. Howard stated that past year voter turnout and early voter turnout were used to project needed ballot stock.

Supervisor English suggested that projections should be based on a group consensus and suggested that staff reach out to other counties to see if they have a formula to calculate how many ballots are needed for each election.

Ms. Howard said that she had been in contact with other counties to discuss issues, but she would reach out again to research a ballot formula calculation. She noted that other counties had also experienced difficulties with long lines and other issues.

Chairman Searle asked if the number of ballots ordered was impacted by budgetary constraints.

Ms. Howard assured the Board that budget had not been a constraint when ordering ballots for the general election. She added that wait times at the vote centers were not impacted by lack of ballot stock.

Chairman Searle asked what the life expectancy of the ballot stock was.

Ms. Howard said she would look into it.

She listed several recommendations on how to resolve some of the issues at the vote centers.

Chairman Searle noted that some of the recommendations involved legislative changes.

Mr. Vlahovich said that one option to ensure there were enough poll workers was to make it mandatory for County employees to work at the vote centers.

Mr. Hanson suggested an election stipend to address the exempt vs. non-exempt employee issue.

Supervisor English wanted the Elections Department to have paper ballots available like the ones used for early voting. She thought some people could have the option to vote on paper ballots and it would address long lines due to the time people take on the vote express machines.

Chairman Searle said that for budget purposes he would like the recommendations to have a cost associated with them.

Vice-Chairman Call said that the election process could always be improved, but noted that it could not be flawless with so many moving parts. He stated that the Board would take responsibility for the issues that were part of the general election. He added that he would continue to encourage citizens to vote by early ballot to avoid any issues during Election Day.

Supervisor English noted that she did not think it would be a good idea to have County employees work at the vote centers as there could be a conflict of interest and added that the responsibility of staffing vote centers should be that of the public. She stated that more education had to be done on the whole process, but specifically on write in candidates and their requirements.

Ms. Margo Macartney, County resident, said that she would have volunteered to be a poll worker and added that she supported the early voting process.

Chairman Searle said he liked the idea of having paper ballots available at the vote centers.

Mr. Chuck Alton, County resident, said that he thought the County should invest in a more professional video explaining the voting process.

The Board thanked Ms. Howard for her work on the General Election.

Chairman Searle adjourned the meeting at 2:19 p.m.

APPROVED:

Richard R. Searle, Chairman

ATTEST:

Arlethe G. Rios, Clerk of the Board