

BOARD OF CIVIL AUTHORITY MEETING

December 17, 2019

MEMBERS PRESENT: Gary Anderson, Roger Audet, Richard Bailey, Frederika French, Edward French, Dave Gagnier, Brian Jones, Mary “Pixie” Loomis and Kimberly Moulton

OTHERS PRESENT: None

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm. K. Moulton asked for nominations for interim chairman for the meeting in the absence of the Chairman, Susan Bartlett. R. Audet nominated R. French for interim chairman. Hearing no other nominations, nominations were closed and R. French acted as chair for the meeting.

1. **Annual Town Meeting – set location and start time:** R. French turned the meeting over to K. Moulton to discuss this. At the last two town meetings, there have been people asking to have the annual town meeting moved from the Lamoille Union High School (LUHS) back to the Hyde Park Elementary School (HPES). K. Moulton stated that she and Susan Bartlett met with Diane Reilly, the principal at HPES to look at the logistics since the renovation. During that meeting, there was discussion of a community meal after the annual meeting, the location of the polls and possibly pushing back the start time from 9am to 10am so that a community meal afterwards was better timed and geared towards a lunch meal. There was discussion of seating, HPES has 75 folding chairs that the BCA would need to set up. There was discussion of the tables required for polling, poll entrances/exits, voter check in for meeting in the gym and for the Selectboard to sit at during the meeting. The BCA would need to haul the tables from the town office to HPES to set them up. If more than 75 people are at the annual town meeting, they can sit in the bleachers. Parking and handicapped parking were discussed. K. Moulton was concerned that there isn't enough overall parking at HPES, but more importantly, not enough handicapped parking at HPES. D. Reilly offered that people who need to could park tight up against the sidewalk in the bus lane. She stated that doing this does leave a passable lane for cars to get out, as long as the parked cars are tight to the sidewalk. During the meeting at the school, it was determined that the best location for the polls would be in the lobby. People could access the polls by walking the hallways from the gym to the lobby or by entering from the lobby entrance. Before, during and immediately following the annual town meeting, there will be people entering the polls from two locations. The entrance and exit would have to have good signage so people knew where to go. D. Reilly showed S. Bartlett and K. Moulton the kitchen area and indicated that the school chef could prepare the meal. Seating for the meal was discussed and the meal tables would have to be set up at the back of the gym prior to the meeting to lessen any interrupting noise during the meeting. K. Moulton asked D. Reilly about a sound system. They do have a system with microphones. They don't have the ability to record the meeting onto a USB drive that K. Moulton could use to write the minutes of the meeting. Since they don't have the same system as LUHS, K. Moulton has looked at hiring someone to assist with taking minutes at the meeting. As this will be a Presidential Primary election, there will be another ballot to hand out. There will be two LNMUUSD school budget ballots, a town ballot and the Presidential Primary ballot. Voters will have to declare which Presidential

Primary ballot they want, either the Democratic or Republican then will get the other ballots. We are expecting a higher than normal turnout at the polls because of the Presidential Primary. K. Moulton stated that she isn't against moving the meeting from LUHS to HPES but a move would require the BCA to commit to half a day the Monday prior to the annual town meeting to assist with moving all the tables, setting up the gym for the meeting and the setting up the polls. Then after the polls close, there would need to be BCA who could commit to tearing down the polls, cleaning up the gym including collapsing the chairs and then bringing it all back over to the town clerk's office. We would still need BCA to meet at the town offices in the lower level to count the ballots. The school ballots will be co-mingled and counted at the school so two BCA members will need to take those over and count with other BCA members from the LNMUUSD sending schools. The Presidential Primary ballots will be run through the tabulator but every ballot will need to be looked at looking for write ins. The town ballots will need to be hand counted.

D. Gagnier is concerned for the security of the polls with people coming and going from multiple entrances. At LUHS, there is one entrance and one exit for the polls and poll workers are better able to control what is happening in the polling area. He is also concerned about the chatter that would be happening at the back of the gym during the meeting that be distracting from those listening to the meeting.

R. Audet is concerned that with the Presidential Primary happening this year, the polls might be a lot busier than in the past few years. He stated that maybe this isn't the year to make this kind of change.

Ed French arrived at 6:15pm.

B. Jones stated that the annual town meeting today is far different than it was when it was being held at HPES. It used to be that everything was done from the floor at the meeting. Now, there is less being done at the meeting and more being done at the polls.

R. Bailey asked about security at the meeting and polls. K. Moulton stated it may be a bit more difficult to keep an eye on the comings and goings of the voters with multiple entrances into the gym. We would have to set up an entrance checklist at the hallway entrance for people coming from the polls and an entrance checklist for people coming directly in from the parking lot. Everyone who checked in would get a hand stamp so the BCA would know they checked in if a paper ballot was called for. K. Moulton described how she thought they could set up the lobby to hopefully provide a polling location that was not confusing to the voter and that poll workers could hopefully keep an eye on what's happening in the polls.

P. Loomis felt that logically, this would be a lot more work but felt that the voters should see the results of the recent renovation at HPES.

R. Bailey stated it would be a logistical nightmare and that the school board and the Selectboard should get together and put on a community meal at HPES instead of moving the annual meeting.

R. Bailey made the motion that was seconded by P. Loomis to keep the annual town meeting at LUHS with the same meeting start time of 9:00am and poll opening time of 8:30am. The motion passed, with K. Moulton abstaining. It was noted that someone from the BCA will need to speak to the voters regarding this decision – how and why we decided to stay at LUHS for the 2020 annual town meeting. It was also noted that we could look at this move again when the change isn't happening during a Presidential Primary year.

2. **Election Guidelines for Poll Watchers:** R. French stated that a draft guideline was provided for review. K. Moulton stated that the document was mostly created using the state statutes but there are a few items in our version that other towns have in their policy. It is something that we could hand out to poll watchers during an election, if needed, to avoid any confusion or disruption. The document was reviewed with a few questions asked and answered.

P. Loomis made a motion that was seconded by B. Jones to approve the Election Guidelines for Poll Watchers. The motion passed unanimously.

3. **Election Guidelines for Candidates and Campaign Workers:** R. French stated that a draft guideline was provided for review. K. Moulton stated that like the document that was just approved, this document was mostly created using the state statutes but there are items in our version that other towns have in their policy. Although state statute allows the Presiding Officer, the Town Clerk, to make this policy, K. Moulton felt it was best that the approval come from the BCA so that no one thinks this is an arbitrary policy.

E. French made a motion that was seconded by P. Loomis to approve the Election Guidelines for Candidates and Campaign Workers. The motion passed unanimously.

4. **Other Business:** K. Moulton shared that she had been working with Paul Nesky and Mitzi McInnis to set up mobile polling location at Sterling View Mobile Home Park prior to all Australian ballot elections. We would set up for two hours in their community room. We would take absentee ballot requests over for them to fill out and we would issue the absentee ballot on the spot. The voter could sit down in the community room to fill out their ballots and turn it back into us before we leave or they could take it home and either mail it back or drop it off at the office. Statutes require that there is at least one person from each political party and K. Moulton needs volunteers to make this happen. E. French and P. Loomis stated they would be willing to assist. R. French also stated she would be willing to assist if needed. K. Moulton stated she was looking at doing this February 22, 2020 from 10am to 12pm in the community room at Sterling View Mobile Home Park. She would be in touch with the Secretary of State's Election Division to make sure all statutory requirements are being met when we do this and would reach out to Paul Nesky who will get this into their newsletters to let the mobile home park residents know this is coming. K. Moulton thanked Ed, Pixie Riki and for volunteering.

There was a motion that was seconded to adjourn the meeting at 6:45pm. The motion passed unanimously.