

**TOWN OF HYDE PARK  
BOARD OF CIVIL AUTHORITY  
OCTOBER 26, 2021**

**Hybrid Meeting due to COVID-19**

**Board Members Present:** Susan Bartlett, Richard Bailey, Kimberly Moulton,

**Board Members Virtual:** Brickett Bailey, Lisa Barry, Vicki Emerson, Ed French, Riki French, Pixie Loomis and Tina Teale

**Others Present:** None

Chair S. Bartlett brought the meeting to order at 6:45pm.

**1) 2022 Election Cycle**

There was general discussion over the changes made recently to election laws. K. Moulton felt the Hyde Park BCA should meet to confirm how we will proceed based on these changes. We need to set the location and time of elections and polls, confirm use of our drop box for elections, vote on allowing processing absentee ballots prior to elections and review the current list of election workers.

There was general discussion around the Town Meeting, Statewide Primary and General Election poll locations and poll hours and the Tow Meeting start time.

There was a motion by R. Bailey that was seconded by P. Loomis to hold the annual Town Meeting at the Lamoille Union High School with the poll hours to be 8:30am to 7:00pm and the floor meeting to start at 9:00am; to hold the Statewide Primary and General Election polls at the Hyde Park Town Municipal Building in the lower level with poll hours from 7:00am to 7:00pm. Motion passed unanimously by a voice vote.

Regarding the use of the drop box during election, K. Moulton stated the Legislature is allowing local BCA's to decide how and when to use the drop box during elections and if they want to close the drop box at a certain time the night before an election. K. Moulton stated closing our drop box at the close of the day the day before an election means that Village customers couldn't drop off their Village payments. K. Moulton stated that there is a notice placed on the drop box the morning of Town Meeting advising voters to take their absentee ballots to the polls at the high school. If a town office staff member comes over to the office during poll hours, the drop box is checked just in case. During the Statewide Primary and General Election Day, the drop box is checked throughout the day as well as right at 7:00pm. As a side note, K. Moulton stated that we are required to check our post office box for absentee ballots before the close of the post office. This has been our standard practice since I became Town Clerk.

E. French made a motion that was seconded by B. Bailey to continue to use the same practice has been used in the past which is checking the drop box through the day on election days, putting a sign on the drop box on Town Meeting days to take absentee ballots to the polls at the high school, and checking the post office box for absentee ballots before the end of the post office business day. Motion passed unanimously by a voice vote.

Regarding the processing of absentee ballots prior to election day, K. Moulton stated that the temporary statute that allowed us to do this in 2020 and 2021 has been made permanent. We are allowed to process absentee ballots in the preceding 30 days prior to any election by vote of the BCA. This was a huge time saver during the Statewide Primary, the General Election and 2021 Town Meeting. K. Moulton stated that she would like the BCA to support this by allowing it in Hyde Park.

A motion was made by V. Emerson and seconded by T. Teale to approve the processing of absentee ballots during the 30 days preceding an election.

T. Teale had questions about the processing of the absentee ballots. K. Moulton explained everything was done in dual control so that the secrecy of the voted ballot was not lost. Pairs of election workers worked together to make sure the Clerk's office had checked the absentee ballot in so that it showed as checked in on a checklist and then separate the certificate envelope from the voted ballot. Once that was done, they verified the number of ballots matched the number of envelopes and took the certificate envelopes and the ballots to the pair of election workers who were then feeding the ballots into the tabulator. Before they did that, they verified the number of ballots they received against the number of certificate envelopes to make sure it all balanced out.

A question was asked about who tracked the numbers on the tabulator. K. Moulton stated that the Secretary of State's Office provided a spreadsheet that required 2 election offices to log the start and ending readings on the tabulator every time absentee ballots were processed. If the starting numbers for the day didn't exactly match the ending number for the prior processing day, you knew there was a problem. That didn't happen in Hyde Park. Again, everything was done in dual control.

P. Loomis stated that she assisted in the processing of absentee ballots prior to the election last year and was impressed with the thoroughness of the procedures.

It was noted that processing the absentee ballots prior to the election actually allowed election workers to focus on the voters coming into the polls that day. It makes the polls a little less hectic during an already busy day.

The motion passed unanimously by a voice vote.

The list of Election Workers was reviewed. K. Moulton clarified that the people on this list are people interested in working the election polls and that the BCA are already considered Election Officials as part of the Justice of the Peace or Selectboard duties. The list has been adjusted slightly to remove a few people who moved out of town.

E. French made the motion that was seconded by R. Bailey to accept the list of Election Workers as written. The motion passed unanimously by a voice vote.

## **2) Other Business – There was no other business**

There was a motion to adjourn by E. French and seconded by R. Bailey. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:13pm.