

Documenters

POWERED BY CITY BUREAU & SIGNAL CLEVELAND

Board Meeting

Documenter name: Marvetta Rutherford

Agency: [Cuyahoga County Board of Elections](#)

Date: Oct. 8, 2024

[See more about this meeting at Documenters.org](#)

Summary

- Many details of this election cycle are still being worked on even though early voting is underway.
- 71% of eligible voters in Cuyahoga County are expected to cast their vote this election.
- Public commenters represented a group that says it wants fair and legal elections.

Follow-Up Questions

- Will the board sign the resolution presented by United Sovereign Americans?

Notes

The meeting came to order and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. All members were present. Motion to accept the previous meeting minutes was made and passed.

Various [agenda](#) items including election requirements and guidance from the Ohio Secretary of State (SOS) – some of which were walk-on items – were discussed by Board Chair Henry Curtis and other members of the board. Per one of the SOS directives, certified candidates were read into the record for president and vice president of the United States.

Board Member Inajo Davis Chappell asked about the [SOS advisory](#) about employees assisting voters dropping off absentee ballots on behalf of someone else. She questioned how much authority the employees have in regards to enforcing the policy that someone assisting another person must fill out [a form](#). Chappell: What are the consequences if the person does not comply? Is the board permitted to count those ballots?

Board Director Anthony Perlatti said the advisory is the only thing that this or any Ohio elections board has received from the state regarding [directive 2024-21](#). He spoke of a

“frequently asked questions” document that was mentioned on a recent webinar. That document has not been published. He said he was told that it was in a draft status and was unsure when it would be shared. He said if anyone shows up on behalf of anyone else, there will be forms available to be filled out. If people refuse to fill out a form, BOE will collect the ballot and put it in a separate box. Hopefully, there will be additional guidance from Columbus, he said. Current law states that elections boards count ballots if the name, address, date of birth, ID and signature match what is in the current records.

Motion passed to acknowledge the SOS communications regarding election candidates and protocol.

Next was an update on the new Board of Elections (BOE) building site, 1801 Superior Ave.

There was a [slideshow](#) of the proposed headquarters. The board plans to start to move in during the first quarter of 2025 and still successfully conduct the primaries in May, Perlatti said.

The building will house other county agencies as well, such as Health and Human Services. Early in-person voting for the May election will also be held in this structure, according to Perlatti.

John Myers and Paul Sturman from the Cuyahoga County Department of Public Works presented. Their update was as follows:

- Looking at Feb. 1, 2025, as the beginning of the move.
- The county entered into a \$50 million lease for the space and the first floor has more space than the entire current building.
- More than \$500,000 of new furniture will be included.
- They showed a floor plan for the first floor.
- This site will include additional parking.

Chappell asked about any foreseeable delays to the move-in date. Myers said there were none, although he noted any time you’re working with procurements, some things are out of our control.

Chappell asked about the other agencies that would be in the structure. Myers said that the departments under [Cuyahoga County Health and Human Services](#) (HHS) will be in the space. The [Department of Senior and Adult Services](#) is expected to be there.

Chappell asked questions regarding the influx of the public utilizing the parking lots and the building. She is in favor of a sublease agreement to know what other agencies will

operate out of the building.

Board Member Lisa Stickan said that in previous meetings this was discussed. HHS administrative usage was the idea she carried away, rather than members of the public coming to the building who need HHS services.

Myers spoke to possible scenarios with [nonprofit Step Forward](#), the only other tenant in the building.

Curtis spoke about security concerns. Myers assured the board this is being taken into account. He suggested that he will have solid numbers about the additional people that would occupy the space by Thanksgiving. Sturman said that current HHS leases don't start to end until the end of 2025.

Board Member Terence McCafferty asked about the current condition of the building and was told that needed demolition is complete and wiring will be starting shortly. Permitting for the parking is underway.

Chappell asked about hanging power cords from the ceilings at the Halle Building. Myers said they will find out, adding that the freight elevator has been fixed to the tune of more than \$600,000.

Next item on the agenda: Perlatti spoke about modifications to outside vote-by-mail ballot collection, discussing three points:

- A. Background
- B. Collection / physical location
- C. Whether or not the person is dropping off for someone else as noted above

He gave his opinion about the situation. Chappell spoke about the previous directive, which said people had to come into the building. She asked if there was enough staff to handle the vote-by-mail tabulation process. She also spoke to the crowded situation in the building because of the beginning of early voting. Perlatti said there will be six people there at all times. Cars will be given clipboards as they wait in the drop-off line to ensure that the process moves as smoothly as possible. He has been assured by county leadership that additional staff is obtainable. He also spoke about the board's [website having information about this development](#). There is a three-page ballot this election.

Chappell spoke of the roughly 145,000 vote-by-mail applications received as of Oct. 3 and the lack of trust in the U.S. Post Office delivering ballots on time. This results in an

increase in in-person drop-off, and the board needs to be prepared, Chappell said.

Motion to approve modification passed.

More items from the agenda were hurriedly read and approved by the board. With regard to the ballot order for the Nov. 5 election, Perlatti spoke about Election Day turnout per precinct in past elections and the number of registered voters for those elections. Provisional turnouts were also looked at. New for this election: They will look at vote-by-mail usage. Around 12 days from the election they will look at the numbers of vote by mail. Then the determination will be made whether or not to purchase more ballots. He is anticipating a 71% voter turnout. Motion made to approve was passed.

The board acknowledged recent deaths, resignations and appointments among elected officials across the county.

Payment up to \$45,620 total for the use of 95 private polling locations was approved.

Additional computers are being purchased in compliance with state mandates that they operate on Microsoft Windows 11. Prices were discussed. Chappell asked about the range of the bid dollar amounts. Perlatti said he didn't know. Dialogue continued with the idea that the lowest bid is not always the best, according to Chappell.

Bids have gone out for additional supplies for the election. There was some discussion about why certain bidders were not chosen. Motion to approve made and passed.

Challenges to individual voter registrations were up next. These challenges are from people who have gotten campaign literature or a Board of Elections acknowledgment for people who do not live at the address, Perlatti said.

Hasani Wheat, the BOE registration manager, presented the challenges.

The first challenge was from a woman who lives in the county. This is for a man who doesn't live at the address listed in Euclid. The man's registration was circulated by Black Fork Strategies, an organization that has come under [scrutiny](#) for possible false registrations. Neither party was present. Motion to uphold the challenge and cancel the man's registration made and passed.

Next, a challenge from a registered voter about a person who was registered at a home in Cleveland. She has owned it since 1978 but never lived there. This voter was not present. Motion to uphold the challenge and cancel the registration in question made

and passed.

Next was another challenge from a voter who lives in Cleveland Heights. The person registered at the address has never lived in the home. The owner of the property has owned the home since 2010. The challenger was sworn in after saying that his camera on Zoom did not work. After testimony was made, the motion to uphold the challenge and cancel the registration in question was made and passed.

Up next, a registered voter challenged a person who had never lived in his residence. The challenger appeared via Zoom as well. He owns his house in Moreland Hills and has lived there since 1984. The proposed voter was also registered by Black Fork Strategies. Motion to uphold the challenge and cancel the registration in question made and passed.

McCafferty asked about Black Fork Strategies and the correlation of fraudulent registrations. Chappell spoke to prior challenges with several of these organizations.

Another voter challenge concerning an address in Cleveland Heights was upheld.

Further discussion occurred about the final day of voter registration for the Nov. 5 election, which was Oct. 7. Deputy Board Director Anthony Kaloger said any registration cards received in the mail and postmarked by Monday or earlier would be accepted. Estimated voting during the first hour of [early in-person voting on Oct. 8](#) was 175, Kaloger said. Photo ID is required.

Last up, four members of United Sovereign Americans presented the board with a resolution that they wanted signed.

[Editor's note: United Sovereign Americans has filed a lawsuit regarding the state's voter rolls with a federal judge in Akron. Some have alleged the group has based its claims on false or incomplete data. Learn more from the [Akron Beacon Journal](#)].

Dorene Polensek Miller from Wooster spoke. Miller said United Sovereign Americans is a nationwide organization of thousands of volunteers. Their main purpose is to ensure fair and legal elections. Miller said the organization has amassed “alarming discrepancies” in Ohio’s voter database. The team’s resolution has been shared with state leaders. It can be read at unite4freedom.com. Four areas of concern:

- Voter rolls must be accurate
- The votes counted must be from eligible voters only
- Number of votes counted must balance with voters who voted

- Only 1 in 125,000 ballots can be in error

Commenters said their audits uncovered inaccuracies among voter registrations in Ohio's 2022 elections. They said they want proof of citizenship, accurate voter rolls, hand-marked secure ballots, and systems compliant with federal laws.

The fourth speaker lives in North Royalton. She summarized the resolution and its requests. She asked them to sign the resolution to show their allegiance to fair and legal elections. A copy was left with the board.

The meeting was adjourned.

If you believe anything in these notes is inaccurate, please email us at cleDOCUMENTERS@gmail.com with "Correction Request" in the subject line.