**SOUTH CAROLINA STATE ELECTION COMMISSION**

**MINUTES**

**Thursday, October 17, 2024**

**10:00 AM**

1122 Lady Street, Suite 500

Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Present: Hon. Dennis Shedd, Chairman; Ms. JoAnne Day; Mr. Clifford Edler; Ms. Linda McCall; Mr. Scott Moseley.

Others Present: Howard Knapp, Executive Director; Jenny Wooten McGill, Director of Government Affairs and Policy; Thomas Nicholson, General Counsel; Madelyn Chavis, Senior Paralegal; Elizabeth Harrell, Executive Assistant; Paige Salonich, Director of Training and County Support Services; TJ Lundeen, Director of Public Information; Brian Leach, Voter Services.

Chairman Shedd called the meeting to order. Chairman Shedd stated that a quorum was present. Director Knapp advised all notices of the meeting had been posted as required by the Freedom of Information Act.

**Approval of Minutes:**

September 18, 2024, South Carolina Election Commission Meeting

With no discussion on the minutes, a motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Mosely. The motion was seconded by Chairman Shedd. The motion passed unanimously.

**New Business:**

General Election Preparation Update

Director Knapp explained the agency’s focus on eligible voter registration. Chairman Shedd inquired about ineligible voters, to which Director Knapp informed him that the SEC removes people who have become unqualified. The SEC has been made aware of six cases of ineligible voters being registered, and they had immediately removed them from the list.

Director Knapp went into the details of how the purchase of the voting equipment upgrade will aid in the upcoming General Election by shortening lines and increasing positive voter experience. Two other focuses have been on training county election officials and poll clerks to prepare everyone.

Chairman Shedd and Director Knapp conversed about the letter to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services that was discussed in the September 18, 2024, SEC Minutes. That response has been sent to the Attorney General’s office. Them and 13 other attorneys general signed on it.

Discussion between Chairman Shedd, Commissioner Moseley, and Director Knapp over voter registration and turnout in South Carolina, where Director Knapp provided specific numbers of expected based on prior turnout.

Chairman Shedd and Director Knapp had discussion over Election Day vote counting and confidence in results, early voting, and challenges to expect with absentee voting. Director Knapp further explained that votes are not counted before polls close. Absentee ballots are counted starting at 7:00 am on election day, and he reassured that the absentee voting process is as simplified as possible.

Commissioner Day, Director Knapp, and Jenny McGill, Director of Governmental Affairs, discussed the impact of the postal service on absentee voting.

Director Knapp explained the various post-election audits. Hand count audits are conducted as part of post-election audits, a practice accepted nationwide. Third party result verification audits are also performed, but issues with absentee ballots often arise due to varying sensitivity settings in the machines. Commissioner Day and Director Knapp discussed risk limiting audits and absentee ballot signature verification. Note to the Commission that the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that no election is ever perfect. Commissioner Edler inquired about a clerical error that occurred in Berkeley County and Dorchester County.

NVRA Training Update

Jenny McGill explained the NVRA training service and advised them of the new voter declination form.

General Election Protest and Appeal Schedule

Director Knapp briefly explained the General Election protest and appeal schedule.

State Board of Canvassers Meeting

Chairman Shedd and Director Knapp went through the process of election results reporting and certification through the Board of Canvassers from county to state level. In relation to the SEC’s confidence in this upcoming election, the Commission was reassured that staff has done everything they can to prepare for this election.

The Commission and Director Knapp confirmed that the next State Board of Canvassers meeting would be held on Thursday, November 14, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.

State Certified Clerk Program Update

Paige Salonich, Director of Training and County Support Services, briefed the commission on the State Certified Clerk Program, funded by the General Assembly. This program allows county clerks to receive an additional stipend and covers training on security protocols, de-escalation, equipment failures, and more. It’s been a successful pilot program and is essential that those managing polling places are properly trained.

**Executive session to receive legal updates and advice:**

*Trudy Grant, et al v. Howard Knapp, et al*

*Public Interest Legal Foundation v. Howard M. Knapp*

*League of Women Voters v. Alexander, et al*

*Booker v. McMaster, et al.*

*Kleckley v. Garrett, et al.*

Any other matters, as needed, pursuant to S.C. Code of Laws §30-4-70

On motion of Commissioner Day, seconded by Commissioner McCall, the Commission voted to go into executive session to receive legal updates and advice.

On motion of Chairman Shedd, the Commission voted unanimously to leave executive session. Chairman Shedd noted no votes were taken in executive session.

Chairman Shedd adjourned the meeting.