

Town of Athens
Board of Civil Authority Meeting
December 15, 2022 6:45pm
At the Town Office

In attendance: Steve Oakes, David Bemis, Sandi Capponcelli, Harold Noyes, Janet Perry, Hannah Regier, Denise Randall, FACT TV, Dennis Mirante, Matt Perry, James Trimble, Donald Capponcelli

Called to order at 6:50

Discuss getting a ballot tabulator

David asks Hannah to tell the BCA what she's heard about the tabulators. Hannah has spoken with JP at the Secretary of States office and read through the tabulator user guide. The BCA would have to decide on using it. There is just barely enough time, if it was decided today, for the vendor to get us one for Town Meeting. There are some complications though: the tabulator would need to be locked in a vault when it's not in use, or in a locked room with a log to record everyone entering and leaving. It also requires a chain of custody log every time the tabulator or memory card is moved. There isn't room in the safes for a tabulator, which is the size of a large briefcase when detached from the ballot box. David asks if it could be locked in a file cabinet. It's possible, but it would have to be a dedicated, always locked drawer with a key. The board discusses purchasing a small safe or file cabinet for the tabulator. The office in the Community Center is an option, but it's hard to know who goes in and out. Hannah says if the BCA wants to buy a safe for the tabulator, they would need to do it ASAP so that it's ready when the vendor brings the tabulator.

At least 10 days before an election, two election officials would need to perform a logic and accuracy test on the tabulator, which involves marking ballots, feeding them into the tabulator, doing a hand count and comparing the results. She guesses this would take at least a couple hours. In use, it can reject ballots with overvotes, which gives people a chance to correct their ballot. Write ins need to be hand counted still.

For local elections, the town would have to pay to have ballots printed. For statewide elections, the SOS provides the ballots. Hannah does not know the cost of having ballots printed. There is no cost for the tabulator itself. The SOS provides them and the maintenance required and the memory cards.

David asks if Hannah doesn't want the tabulator. Hannah doesn't think the town is ready for the storage situation unless someone on the BCA can track down a safe in time for a tabulator to arrive. Denise says that the time required of the BCA and elections officials might be about the same as hand counting. It would be a bit more work for Hannah to set up and open the polls for an election. Sandi says this sounds like a crunch to get everything in place and the town may be better waiting until next year and having everything in place.

David asks if the BCA votes today to get a tabulator, does that mean that it has to be used for town meeting. Hannah reads the statute which says the BCA would be voting on requiring the town to use a tabulator for the upcoming election. David asks what Hannah would prefer. She says she would prefer to not get one until there is storage for it so there isn't a last minute dash

to try to house it properly. Janet asks if she can get the dimensions of the tabulator so the town can size a safe for it. Hannah will do that. Sandi asks where the safe will go.

Hannah suggests to call another BCA meeting at least 60 days before the next election if there is storage ready for the tabulator. She thinks it will be a good thing in the long run, but the town isn't ready just now.

David talks about getting the school districts and technical center ballots combined with the town ballot on a tabulator readable ballot. Denise asks how those would be done and paid for. Hannah thinks it sounds a bit complicated to coordinate the four different ballots into one and figure out who pays what. David says that the high school pays for their ballots that are in Athens. Hannah says they don't currently. They send a file and it is photocopied at the town office onto paper the town pays for. David says they are supposed to pay for them. Denise is curious how the other towns in the district do their town meeting ballots. Sandi says that at this point there seem to be more questions than answers.

David makes a motion to table the tabulator discussion, but asks Hannah to get dimensions, and that we not use it for this town meeting, but that we prepare for it and bring it up again at the next BCA meeting. Denise seconds.

Harold adds: with the idea of asking Rockingham or Westminster the questions as to who pays for each of the ballots or whatever. To get a straight answer.

Put to a vote: all in favor.

David makes a motion to adjourn. Sandi seconds. All in favor.

Adjourned at 7:05

Respectfully submitted,
Hannah Regier, Town Clerk