CITY OF ROCKVILLE

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF ELECTIONS

POST-ELECTION FORUM I

Thursday, January 30, 2020
PARTICIPANTS:

Board of Supervisors of Elections:

    DR. LOIS NEUMAN, Chair
    GRAHAM JOHNSON
    ROBERT KURNICK
    SOFYA ORLOSKY
    STEPHEN WEINER

Staff:

    SARA TAYLOR-FERRELL, City Clerk/Director of Council Operations
    JUDY PENNY, Election Specialist

Speakers:

    JACK GELIN
    BRIDGET NEWTON
    Mayor, Rockville, Maryland
    BERYL FEINBERG
    Rockville City Council
    MARK PIERZCHALA
    Rockville City Council
    JOE JORDAN
    BRIGITTA MULLICAN
    ED FEINBERG
    DREW POWELL
    MATT PERKINS
PARTICIPANTS (CONT'D):

DON NICHOLS
National Lead for Political and Mailing Services
United States Postal Service

GABRIEL HAMILTON
Postmaster, Rockville, Maryland

MONIQUE ASHTON
Rockville City Council

VINCENT RUSSO

LINDA COHN
League of Women Voters

VIRGINIA ONLEY

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PROCEEDINGS

DR. NEUMAN: Good evening. It is 7:00 p.m. and we welcome you to the Rockville Board of Supervisors of Elections Forum, a post election forum where we are here to hear from you as to what your response was to the elections and anything you wish to tell us about elections. We appreciate you taking your time to share your thoughts with us.

And I will be brief and then we'll get started. I want to introduce the members of the Board of Supervisors of Elections, Graham Johnson, Robert Kurnick -- the names are in alphabetical, they're not seated in alphabetical order -- Sofya Orlosky, Stephen Weiner, and I'm Lois Neuman, the Chair. We also have Sara Taylor Ferrell, who is over at the table, who is the City Clerk, and Judy Penny, who you all met when you came in.

The purpose of this forum is to give the Board of Supervisors of Elections the opportunity to hear your comments about the 2019 election, so this is in essence our fact finding mission.
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1 We're pulling together as much information as we can to see the overall picture of the election.

   So we want to hear your thoughts about the election process, suggestions for ways to facilitate the voting process, and ideas for how to enhance voter participation, which is our charge by the code.

   The Board will consider what we learn at each forum -- as you know, there are two of them -- to factor into our reports and presentations. So you are giving us data that we can work with, qualitative data, but data. Procedurally, this is not a formal meeting. The Board created the forum format to obtain information from you.

   You have comment cards -- this is called overkill -- we have comment cards, we have a survey, we have a sign in sheet for you to let us know that you're here tonight, and a signup sheet if you wish to speak. Now, if you do wish to speak, I'll have a couple of words to say about that, but we will have a hand microphone going around that Judy will give to you, so you don't
need to stand and move.

There will be a second post election meeting on Saturday, February the 8th, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. with the same format. And you can certainly come again as you wish. As is the tradition of the Board, we try to do things in various times, on various days, to allow people the opportunity to come at convenient times. So here we are in the evening and we will be in the morning on a weekend.

You should have an agenda, which you could have either printed off or that we had a copy, and you should also have a survey that you picked up at the door as you came in, and it looks like this, which gives you the opportunity to share your thoughts for the future and how you would like to see elections. So let us know if you need a copy.

If you wish to speak, I will call you in the order of your names on the signup sheet. We will provide a microphone that you can just stand if you wish and then speak into the microphone.
And, as you see, we are being recorded by television, as well as by audio, so we need you to speak in the microphone so that we can capture all of your comments.

Now, to be sure we have time for everyone, each person will have a five minute time limit with a fifteen second warning right before the end. And you can return for an additional five minutes after all speakers have completed their remarks. This gives everybody an opportunity to say what they have to say and then we can go back and hear more after everybody has had their chance.

Please submit any written material before you speak. So if you brought anything with you that you wish to share with us, you can give it to us prior. You can also send us comments and send them to the City Clerk by February the 29th, and there is a website on the -- an email -- thank you -- an email on the survey instrument.

The board itself will be on a listening mission her. We may encourage you to add
information, such as we may say tell us more or
explain what you mean by or give us some examples
to tell you that we don't exactly get what you're
saying and it would benefit by having more
information.

We want to hear information,
clarification, details, and concerns for the
board's discussion and we may be taking notes.
And Sofya is our scribe and so she will be doing
copious note taking.

We welcome your involvement in
facilitating the voting process. And as the code
says, we enhance voter participation, and that is
certainly what we want to do.

So I will stop talking and I will call
the first speaker. When you get the microphone
you'll please state your name and any identifier
you wish to give us, if you're from out of the
City, if you represent a certain district, if you
represent a certain organization, of whatever you
wish to say. And you will have five minutes once
you start.
So I need the signup sheet. We only have one person that signed up. Okay. Short, yeah. Jack Gelin. Okay, you're up.

MR. GELIN: Do you want me to come up?

DR. NEUMAN: No, no, no, no, you don't have to come over. We're going to give you the microphone, so you just stay there.

MR. GELIN: Thank you. Good evening, I'm Jack Gelin and I've been active -- since I retired 22 years I've been active in civic politics. And there are some things that can't be helped, such as the lack of newspaper coverage of Rockville politics -- the Post doesn't do anything hardly in the metro section, and a population that's doubled since I'm here. And since a few months ago I moved to Ingleside at King Farm, a lot of people, not only just elderly, but they haven't lived in Rockville and don't feel that they are part of the community. So we try and get them involved in issues and show that they are part of our civic life. And we had a real big problem in that our ballots were not mailed as...
supposed to be and it was hard to get people
interested and explain what was going on and how
to take care of it.

And what I'd like to know is how you
responded to this -- I think it's been brought to
your attention -- and what steps are being to
avoid this problem, because citizen participation
is critical to the health of our city.

And that's about it.

DR. NEUMAN: Okay. I have -- as I say
we're asking you for information, can you tell us
anything more about -- none of the ballots
arrived? I mean give us more information.

MR. GELIN: They weren't -- they weren't
mailed as timely. They were delivered by hand to
our mailboxes in this large community and the
people weren't ready for them. And it's hard
enough to get them interested and at the last
minute they're not likely to participate.

Some years ago the -- 16 percent of the
people voted here, which is abysmal. And mail
voting is -- increases a lot. It's a very, very
good idea. And unless the ballots come, they
won't be returned. And I think that's the crux of
it.

DR. NEUMAN: Okay. I am limited as to
what I can say, so that's why I need to hear as --
we need to hear as much in detail as we can.
Anytime we heard of difficulty about ballots
reaching the proper place, we did act on it. So
that's the best I can give you at this moment.

MR. GELIN: But you have told the City
employees, whoever is in charge of it, that this
is a real problem?

DR. NEUMAN: We are very concerned if
any mail did not get to where it was supposed to
get. Yes, we were very concerned about that.

MR. GELIN: All right.

DR. NEUMAN: And, yes, we did do follow
up with every single place we heard from.

MR. GELIN: Okay.

DR. NEUMAN: And, you know what, let me
ask one more thing. How would you like your
ballots to come to you?
MR. GELIN: By mail.

DR. NEUMAN: No, no, no, you say they were delivered -- they were hand --

MR. GELIN: They were hand delivered in mailboxes.

DR. NEUMAN: Mm-hmm.

MAYOR NEWTON: (Inaudible) after.

MR. GELIN: Yes.

MAYOR NEWTON: After the City discovered that -- because Ingleside residents called the City and said we don't have our ballots, then the City hand delivered them. I think that's what --

MR. GELIN: That's right. And it's hard. A lot of these people are new to Rockville and they don't feel connected, and they should be because they have a stake in it the way all of us do. This is a nonpartisan issue, this is just good governance.

DR. NEUMAN: Well, the intent of vote by mail is to get ballots to everybody and we certainly attempted to do that. You're 100 percent right in terms of we want to involve
everybody in the City and all voters and all residents and all registered voters, everybody, to be involved in the local election.

And our intent was to eliminate any barriers and get the ballots to the voter rather than any obstacles a voter would have to come to the ballot, which would be at a polling place. So anything that interfered with that happening is not a good thing, and certainly we are concerned about it. And we take anything under advisement and any suggestions that you have so that kind of thing would not happen again.

But I will --

MR. GELIN: It's not complicated. What they have to do mail them out timely to the residents and it would be done. I mean this is not very hard. And I know you're -- you care about it. That's why you're volunteering for your job. And this is critical, that's all.

DR. NEUMAN: Yes. Well, I will also tell you we had many conversations with the postal service and who went above and beyond in terms of
making sure that the mail got where it was supposed to. We also had the drop boxes that people could use. And anytime we heard of any difficult at either end, we tried to do the best we could to intervene. So that's why if we don't already have the details, we need to have the details of what happened there so that we can fix it.

Go ahead.

MR. GELIN: Yeah. Why wasn't it mailed to Ingleside, you know, from City Hall? I doubt it's a problem with the Post Office.

MR. JOHNSON: Oh, so your sense is that the ballots may have been mailed to the wrong -- not to Ingleside?

MR. GELIN: No, not timely. I think the (inaudible) was probably addressed (inaudible).

MS. FEINBERG: If I may, I think part of the issue is that just --

DR. NEUMAN: Well, we're five minutes finished on this topic. So I will ask Mr. -- what is your last name?
MR. GELIN: Gelin, G-E-L-I-N.

DR. NEUMAN: Mr. Gelin. Do you wish to 
-- you're finished your five minutes and you wish 
to pick up with this topic and you'll talk for --
you'll have five minutes. Yes?

MS. FEINBERG: I just to want to answer 
it, not five minutes on this topic.

DR. NEUMAN: Mm-hmm, go ahead.

MS. FEINBERG: But I think the 
distinction is the distribution of ballots for 
assisted living and nursing homes versus 
independent living. I believe that's the issue --
is the policy that will be in place for the next 
election, how do you send ballots. Some 
facilities, and perhaps others in here can correct 
if I'm wrong -- a place like Ingleside has both 
independent living as well as assisted and I 
believe memory care also. So how do you -- to 
make that distinction? And I think that's what 
Mr. Gelin is referring to, those with independent 
living did not receive them by mail in a timely 
manner until it was brought to the City's
attention.

DR. NEUMAN: Yes, there were -- there
are different regulations in nursing homes and
we've got the -- we've got it. And essentially we
will work on this for the recommendations for the
next election.

Yes. Any further?

MR. PIERZCHALA: I was just going to
add, as a person who has looked at the voter
database over several campaigns, the mailing
address can be the same for 20, 30, 40 people
within one building, because they don't have
assigned room numbers. And I think that probably
complicated the issue in senior living facilities.

MAYOR NEWTON: Not at Ingleside where
they have apartment numbers and they get their
mail through the Postal Service to their
apartment.

DR. NEUMAN: Okay, thank you.

MR. PIERZCHALA: Right. But not
everybody there has that, so.

DR. NEUMAN: Yes.
MR. KURNICK: Lois, can I ask Mr. Gelin a question?

DR. NEUMAN: Yes.

MR. KURNICK: I have a question for Mr. Gelin. The ballots were preceded by three separate mailings of post cards. Did people in that community receive those post cards?

MR. GELIN: I think they did.

MR. KURNICK: So they received the post cards but not the ballots?

MR. GELIN: That's right.

SPEAKER: The ballots were not mailed.

MR. GELIN: They were not mailed.

MR. KURNICK: Okay, I understand.

SPEAKER: Staff was holding the ballots. Delivered them by hand.

DR. NEUMAN: As I say, there were various procedures done at various nursing homes and independent living facilities and we will just -- that will be revisited.

Certainly, it is not our intent or objective to prevent anyone from getting a ballot,
just the opposite. So if something is getting in the way, then we need to fix it.

Are there any other comments or any -- is there anything else you wish to bring to our attention regarding -- yes?

MR. JORDAN: Good evening. My name is Joe Jordan. I live here in Rockville and I was the campaign chair for the Rockville Forward Coalition that ran last year.

I want to first congratulate you guys for doing the job you did. As campaign chair, I attended probably just about every meeting there was. I missed one or two. And then if I couldn't make it I sent someone to fill in. But I thought the results were -- exceeded our expectations. We had no idea we'd see that many people vote and I think you guys did a great job and I congratulate you for that.

A couple of concerns I had. One was the issue that Jack mentioned, that I won't rehash that, but we were concerned that those ballots were being hand delivered to the assisted living
homes. And we weren't sure how that was being handled. And if there was -- not that there would be any bias or anything like that, or influence, but it just seemed like something we weren't familiar with.

I had some concerns with -- and I think this is probably not within your venue or bailiwick -- but the -- it was a surprise, even though it was proper, that people from City Hall could participate in the election, support candidates, and -- which is fine -- contributing money. What concerned us was the use of social media, and the use of social media in particular by any individuals in the Clerk's Office. The Clerk's Office it seems needs to be about -- you know, above suspicion or anything else and any other part of the City since they were funding the election. And it was a particular clerk employee -- clerk office employee who was posting on social media.

So that's a concern. I don't know if it's something the City can address, but I just
wanted to bring it to your attention.

Having attended all the meetings, one of the things that really frustrated me -- and I'm not sure what was going on, what was behind it -- was the frequency of closed meetings, executive sessions. And some of them went 45 minutes, half hour, 45 minutes, with 1 or 2 items on the agenda. One in particular was the evening that you reviewed the financial reports. And why you would have to talk about for 45 minutes any legal issues -- because they were all under the guise of -- or the -- not the guise of but under the exception for getting legal advice -- what could possibly take 45 minutes? What was more egregious I thought was the November 11 meeting where the agenda said you were certifying the election and conducting old and new business, yet you went into executive session for 45 minutes. There were several of us -- Mr. Pierzchala was sitting outside, Miss Onley was sitting outside. And to be honest with you, having then sat in the meeting, I couldn't figure out what would take 45
minutes because you discussed -- and the agenda
didn't really even cover what was being discussed,
which was some complaints that were filed by some
residents. The more serious complaint had to do
with petitions. One particular candidate didn't
seem to have enough or didn't sign a sheet. That
was kind of dismissed out of hand. Another
candidate, if you looked at it, didn't have the
100 necessary signatures. When you addressed that
particular item, you indicated that, yes, there
was one signature that put him at 100 signatures.

Our research showed afterwards that that
wasn't the case. We still couldn't find that
registered voter. It's immaterial; we're moving
on from that.

But I'm just concerned about the
executive sessions and how long it took.

Let's see, I think that's it. There
seemed to be some information finally getting back
to the Clerk's Office where some candidates had
information in advance of a candidate's. And this
had to do with, for example, how many ballots were
collected, how many ballots went up to Montgomery County Board of Elections. And we were surprised because we didn't see it publicly, but yet, as I said, some candidates had some information that we didn't. So, again, I'm just throwing that out there as something that we observed.

So those are the points I had. Again, I congratulate you for the job you did and thank you for doing this forum tonight.

DR. NEUMAN: Okay. Thank you for your comment. Go ahead.

MS. ORLOSKY: On your first item about social media use, was the employee explicitly identifying themselves as --

MR. JORDAN: I'm sorry, I didn't hear what you said.

MS. ORLOSKY: It's okay. On the first item of concern about social media use, was the employee explicitly identifying themselves as City staff on social media?

MR. JORDAN: Yes, yes. It was that particular individual's Facebook page. Yes.
MS. ORLOSKY: But did it say explicitly
that they work for the City of Rockville?

MR. JORDAN: Oh, I don't know. I don't
-- probably not. It was a personal page. Yeah.

Yes, good question.

DR. NEUMAN: Okay, thank you. Anyone
else with -- yes?

MR. PIERZCHALA: Thank you. Mark
Pierzchala, 816 Fordham Street and, yes, I've been
a candidate for 6 straight elections. I mention
that because I want to make a comment about the
finance reporting.

First -- and I've said this to you all
before -- first of all, it's hugely improved over
previous campaigns. Very easy to do, very --
incredibly easy to submit and get posted, you
know, to the -- to the next person right away and
you didn't have to even be in town. That -- that
was very good.

The thing I want to mention about the --
the finance report that the first time I did it
cought me a little bit by surprise was you don't
really ask for the bank account balance on a summary page, you ask for -- and I'm looking at mine that was just submitted -- balances and financial accounts. Okay. That's not quite the same thing because I -- I kept running into my -- what that included was my bank account plus what I hadn't yet pulled down from pay pal. And so in previous years we always had to put our bank account balance, and I think that would be a good addition to do that, maybe to separate that out a little bit. But that's really a minor complaint and probably I stumbled over it only because I was used to five previous campaigns of putting my bank balance down. I spent a good hour trying to balance and I couldn't understand why it wasn't balancing and then I understood what you're asking for finally. So thank you.

And -- and by the way, overall, just excellent performance, excellent execution. We know we have to take care of some things in the future, but I was very pleased with the result.

Thank you.
DR. NEUMAN: Thank you. And as you say, there are things we need to take care of in the future, and that's exactly why we're here right now, to determine what those are that we don't already know.

Yes?

MS. MULLICAN: I'm Brigitta Mullican and I was a candidate. I would just like to say this evening that we have some people from the League of Women Voters who are very, very interested in the vote by mail. They're following this. We have a committee, which I am on. And I'm not sure if they're going to speak, but they are here and they have already reached out to a community using the Nextdoor Neighbor. And there's been a lot of comments. I just thought there'd be a lot more people here because people are weighing in on liking it or not liking it. I think the vote is mostly they do like it. It did increase the voter turnout.

I have lots of questions. I'll try to get some of them asked and I guess we're not going
to get the answers tonight because you're going to
get too any question. And some of them have to do
with the campaign finance report and the database,
which is the thing I have the biggest problems
with. I know the City did a mailing to -- what --
four times -- I guess that's including sending the
ballots. I was real upset to hear that the
ballots weren't mailed to Ingleside. And I know
that some of the problems with those mailings are
the same problems I have when I mail to voters and
there's no unit number or apartment and it just
goes -- who knows where it goes. And I can tell
you, I did early mailings and I got over 200
returns. I did a first class mailing. That's
very frustrating to see how many were returned.

So my question is how many mailings were
clean purged from the four mailings, or the three
previous mailings before the ballots were sent
out? There's no way that I would know that and
that I would like to know. I'd like to know how
many ballots were returned where people did not
vote. So you know how many you mailed in, you
know how many voted, so how many threw them away, you know, discarded them, or whatever.

Also, there was concerns about harvesting votes. And I know that was addressed by you all. It was on the answers of frequently asked questions, but people would start asking those questions and they weren't clear how that was even being controlled.

On closing campaign finance report, the question I have that's personally from my account -- you might want to answer it later, I don't know -- but that is if I have money left over, which I do -- I have a loan that I have, but I have a little extra money that's over that, do I -- can I get that money back to myself? Do I return that money to one of my contributors? So do I have that option? I know there is a line -- you know, there's a code in there where you can return money to a contributor. So I'm not sure exactly how to do that and my treasurer is out of town, so she couldn't be here to ask that question.

I might have more questions, but I might
mail them in. But I'm here to hear what others have to say. But the database is a big issue. How many really were on there, how many got the mailings, how many were purged and deleted? And I will tell you that it was very frustrating to spend a lot of money on first class mailing. And the Board of Elections said they don't want those envelopes which shows they were returned to me undeliverable. And I want to know when the history data is going to be available so I can go in there and see, are those addresses still in the database when they were returned to me undeliverable. So the database is just kind of a detail thing that most people don't bother with, but I want to follow up on that.

But I do want to say the League of Women Voters is looking at this process and they'll come up with some findings.

Thank you.

DR. NEUMAN: Well, I will just make one comment regarding the database, and that is we -- there was a tremendous amount of work and effort
that went into purging it and getting it the
cleanest that we've ever seen. However, that
doesn't mean that it's perfect. The answer to
many of your questions is we can't answer it
because it's not our database, it belongs to the
state and to the county, as you know. So to get
the specific answers you're looking for, some of
them may come from the county.

MR. FEINBERG: Ed Feinberg, 1200
Halesworth Drive, spouse of a campaign candidate.

Several issues. One, I would just echo
what has been said about the accuracy of the
voting list. We have a next door neighbor -- this
is just one example -- who moved a year and a half
ago and received a ballot. There has to be a
better way of ensuring accuracy that -- you know,
I certainly share your concerns.

One thing I --

DR. NEUMAN: Could you go back to that?
You have a neighbor who just mailed in a year and
a half ago and they received a ballot?

MR. FEINBERG: The neighbor moved. I'm
They moved out of state and they still received a ballot at their present home -- at -- at the home that they had moved from.

DR. NEUMAN: And they notified the Board of Elections that they moved?

MR. FEINBERG: No. I don't know. I mean they have or they may not have, but I would think a lot of people --

DR. NEUMAN: That is -- that is a very common problem and one of the reasons why there is an issue with the database, because people move and they don't let anybody know. And it is the responsibility of the registered voter to make sure that their address is correct.

But go ahead with your second --

MR. FEINBERG: Okay. I mean I understand, but if the registered voter is moving out of state, that may not be something that they do. It's just one issue.

Secondly, I implore you -- implore you -- to revise the 8:00 p.m. deadline for receipt of ballots. It made no sense to us and to many
voters whom we spoke with; that it should have been received by midnight on Election Day. Or post -- I'm sorry, postmarked by Election Day. No one can guarantee that it will be received -- you can mail -- you could have mailed it Monday and it may not have been received. I may have been received Wednesday. So one question that I think would be helpful for the public to know is how many ballots were received after 8:00 p.m., how many were received on Wednesday or Thursday after the election? Obviously they weren't counted, but it would be helpful to know just how many were received.

DR. NEUMAN: There was a sweep done by the postal service and they brought us every single ballot that they had on Election Day.

MR. FEINBERG: What about Wednesday, the day after?

DR. NEUMAN: Well, the day after -- there were no -- we had everything that was postmarked on November the 5th and that was received November the 5th.
MR. FEINBERG: It was in --

DR. NEUMAN: Anything else was November the 6th and we wouldn't have counted that.

MR. FEINBERG: But you should have --
you should have known how many were received to
see if this system was going to work or not.

MR. GRAHAM: Maybe Lois can correct me
-- as I understand it, all ballots received after
November 5 were postmarked after November 5.

There were -- correct me if I'm --

DR. NEUMAN: It's correct.

MR. GRAHAM: There were no -- no ballots received on the 6th that were postmarked on the 5th or earlier.

DR. NEUMAN: And we had them all.

MR. GRAHAM: So the post office really did --

MR. FEINBERG: What I'm saying is that
in every other election, when you have an absentee
ballot, you have to have the absentee ballot
postmarked by midnight on Election Day. In this situation, you could have put something in the
mail and it might not have been received on -- by
8:00 o'clock on Election Day. It may have been
received the day after even though it was mailed
within that time. Nobody can guarantee that.

And so the postmark should be the -- the
issue, not the received by date.

DR. NEUMAN: We have an answer for you.
Hold. Go.

MR. NICHOLS: I'm Don Nichols, I'm the
National Lead for Political and Mailing Services
from the United States Postal Service and I was
hoping -- I believed Postmaster Hamilton was going
to speak, so I may be stealing a little bit of his
thunder -- but Postmaster Hamilton on the day of
election did -- went through an inordinate amount
of energy to not only sweep his office, he went
down to our distribution center and made certain
that every single ballot -- walked the floor and
made certain everything got here.

And so, you know, I can let him speak
for himself about some of the other efforts he put
in that day.
MR. HAMILTON: Thank you. That particular day every effort was made to retrieve every ballot from every mailbox, collection box. It was all hands on deck. I had the -- I was escorted here by the Postal Inspection Service and I believe we arrived about 7:45-7:50 with every ballot that was mailed that particular day.

So, again, we made every effort to get every ballot here on Election Day, without fail.

DR. NEUMAN: Thank you.

MR. FEINBERG: Then the other issue is one that I really would request you consider. There was at least one candidate who was calling the City when a sign was placed on the right-of-way. The problem with that is that many people have lawn mowing services. If the signs were on the front lawn, many times the lawn mowing services would take the signs, put them on the right-of-way so that they could mow the lawn, and they weren't put back where they should be.

We know that there was a candidate who was driving down in particular neighborhoods to
see that and then reporting it in and the City
came and removed the sign. We talked to people
who said, I don't know where the signs went. I
got home from work at the end of the day expecting
to see their signs on their lawn. The signs had
been put on the right-of-way and had then been
removed.

So it seems to me an easy way of doing
it is to just give the person 24 hours because you
could actually see where the lawn mowing companies
-- I remember knocking on doors and the lawn
mowing companies were taking the signs out and I
was running after them and putting them back. It
would be very simple to do that. I would just
suggest that that's something to consider.

DR. NEUMAN: Did you let the City
Manager know this as well?

MR. FEINBERG: I'm sorry?

DR. NEUMAN: Did you let the City
Manager know this as well?

MR. FEINBERG: Yes.

DR. NEUMAN: Good.
MS. ASHTON: Good evening, I'm Monique Ashton. I was a candidate and I'm not a council member.

I did want to just start out saying that I was thoroughly impressed with the voter turnout. I think this is a model that other jurisdictions can learn from and I know you all worked very hard on this process. So I wanted to say thank you.

Since we are talking about lessons learned and best practices, I wanted to just share a couple of things. To pull a thread on what Mr. Feinberg was just talking about, I think because the process was so new for people, there was a lot of education that had to be happening -- that had to happen. Fortunately, we had a lot of candidates that were helping on that regard. And I will say that I think a lot of people didn't really understand that they couldn't put their ballots in the mail on Tuesday or Wednesday morning and expect that their ballots would count. So I think that is one area of additional voter education that's needed.
I saw in some of the later mailings that there was something about "must be received by". So I think that was excellent and I think that's something that we need to do very early and often to make sure that we're educating voters about that process. There were many times when we would knock on doors and see people were still trying to put things in the mail and we say, no, please bring them. But I know we weren't able to catch anyone.

So I would love to know that number. I think that's an important metric for us to tabulate as to how many ballots did not count because they were received after the deadline. Having that would be just a good metric for us to know.

MR. GRAHAM: Can I comment?

MS. ASHTON: Yes.

MR. GRAHAM: I guess what we found is all ballots that were mailed by Tuesday, November 5, were received and country. Ballots that were postmarked on November 6 were not received.
obviously by November 5 and were not counted. So every ballot that was mailed by the 5th was counted.

MS. ASHTON: I think it's still a good metric to know. I know that there were several ballots that were not counted. And so I just think that we should know that number.

MR. GRAHAM: You're saying ballots that were mailed --

MS. ASHTON: Exactly.

MR. GRAHAM: Postmarked after the 5th?

MS. ASHTON: Right.

MR. GRAHAM: Okay.

DR. NEUMAN: Received after the 5th?

The ballots that came in on the 6th and later?

MS. ASHTON: Correct.

DR. NEUMAN: Let me ask --

MS. ASHTON: And I think it just speaks to --

DR. NEUMAN: Let me ask you --

MS. ASHTON: -- the voter registration issue -- the voter education issue.
DR. NEUMAN: Let me ask you a question.

MS. ASHTON: Yeah.

DR. NEUMAN: How much time after the election do you want to know? Because we still receive ballots January.

MS. ASHTON: That's interesting, because that's --

DR. NEUMAN: It is interesting. And it is not uncommon --

SPEAKER: At least a week.

DR. NEUMAN: It is not uncommon --

MS. ASHTON: I would say at least --

DR. NEUMAN: -- for that to happen in other states and jurisdictions.

MS. ASHTON: I agree with some of our audience. I think at least a week after would be good. (Laughing)

DR. NEUMAN: Okay.

MR. ASHTON: Receive something today, we don't need to know. But I'm glad people are still interested.

DR. NEUMAN: And we're still tracking
it.

MS. ASHTON: I do want to say one of the nice things about vote by mail is it meant that there were a whole new set of people who were not engaged in the process but were newly able to vote -- people who have transportation issues, mobility issues. And so I think this is an important thing for us to just document and share with the world, at least the U.S., if you will, because I think others can learn from it. We did a great job in increasing our numbers and I think wouldn't it be great if we could continue that and improve upon it.

DR. NEUMAN: Can I interject just a minute? You said something about the candidates going around and talking about vote by mail and encouraging people to vote. And I would underscore that, that I think that was a major contribution in terms of voter education, because not only did the candidates become familiar to the voters, which of course is part of the purpose, but it also educated the voters as to what was
happening in the election this year. And we --
that was done well. We did the mailing and then
the candidates all kind of followed up on that or
went along with it. And it was tremendous. It
really worked in terms of having more people
educated.

MS. ASHTON: I think candidates were so
effective by knocking on doors --

DR. NEUMAN: Yes.

MS. ASHTON: -- that some people were
posting "I voted" on their doors. (Laughter)

DR. NEUMAN: We didn't know that.

That's funny.

MS. ASHTON: I thought it was clever
and, you know, very smart.

The other area I think there's a need
for voter education and just there was some
confusion on the last date that people could
register to vote and still receive a ballot.
There were -- I heard on -- I know that that maybe
shocking, but we did hear that in the field, that
people thought that they could, you know, vote --
register to vote up until a certain date. And there was a -- there was a cutoff date. I don't remember it exactly right now. But in terms of being able to have that ballot mailed. I know that you guys knew to have that to be able to, you know, get everything out in a timely fashion and follow City Code, so I totally get that. But I just think that that area of education and just reminding voters early and often is needed going forward.

DR. NEUMAN: You know that Maryland has same day registration?

MS. ASHTON: Yes.

DR. NEUMAN: And that's exactly what we did so people who hadn't registered could come in Election Day --

MS. ASHTON: Absolutely.

DR. NEUMAN: -- register, and vote.

MS. ASHTON: Absolutely. And that was a -- that's another thing that people were confused about. We heard, well, if I register same day is it provisional, is it not. So I think in general
it's just an area of where do we need to educate voters on the new process and when to register and how and those things.

DR. NEUMAN: Well, we do research on that -- on that person because we have to make sure that they are indeed -- live at this address and they are eligible to vote in the City of Rockville.

MS. ASHTON: Absolutely.

DR. NEUMAN: But the vote will count.

MS. ASHTON: Absolutely.

DR. NEUMAN: And the next time around for the next election, they're registered. I mean they will be a registered voter and they don't have to do anything else.

MS. ASHTON: That's fantastic.

DR. NEUMAN: Absolutely.

Congratulations to the State of Maryland and to us. (Laughter)

MS. ASHTON: The other piece I would say, just again listening to voters and what they had to say, they were confused about the flap.
DR. NEUMAN: The flaps.

MS. ASHTON: The flaps. So I heard some people say, oops, I ripped the flap even though it says do not tear.

DR. NEUMAN: Yes.

MS. ASHTON: But I don't know, you know, what can be done in that regard, but that was confusing point for people, as well as whether they're names were showing on the outside or not, whether there was really privacy. So I just wanted to flag that.

DR. NEUMAN: Yes. Yes, yes.

MS. ASHTON: And you all did such a great job and the candidates did a fantastic job of getting people to come out and inspiring them to vote that we ran out of ballots. And so I just -- make sure -- I think we had to go get more ballots. That's what we heard anyway. That's what we heard when we were standing outside.

DR. NEUMAN: Never, never.

MS. ASHTON: So I don't know if that's a true --
DR. NEUMAN: We never -- we may have had to transfer them --

MS. ASHTON: But that was the word outside.

DR. NEUMAN: -- from one place to the other. We may have had them in one room and had to bring them from one room to another room, but never ever did we run out of ballots. Don't -- squelch that rumor.

MS. ASHTON: That was a rumor outside (inaudible).

DR. NEUMAN: We had plenty of ballots. No, no, no, maybe not in the room.

MS. ASHTON: Right.

DR. NEUMAN: But we had plenty of ballots.

MS. ASHTON: Perfect.

DR. NEUMAN: And that is true of some jurisdictions, which does hit the newspaper, that people -- that the jurisdiction did not print enough ballots. That was not our situation at all. We have plenty of everything.
MS. ASHTON: Great. That's great to hear.

DR. NEUMAN: Yeah.

MS. ASHTON: Thank you. Again, I really appreciate the process and I hope that others can learn from it and I -- I really would love to see the write ups that you do get circulated to other municipalities and (inaudible).

DR. NEUMAN: Well, just to -- I'll tag onto that. The plan is after we get information from both forums we'll incorporate that into our report, which will go to Mayor and Council, and that is the official report. After that there are other people in other locations that are interested in hearing from us and then we will start talking about it. But we won't do it until we have given the official report to Mayor and Council.

Okay.

MR. POWELL: Good evening, my name is Drew Powell. Unfortunately, my experience with the election was not quite as positive as some.
From my perspective there were several irregularities, and even violations involving the 2019 Rockville election, including denial of election documentation to citizens according to Rockville City Code, improper and invalid certification of at least two candidates, improper access to election files by a candidate, fabrication on the part of the BSE chair regarding registered voters, lack of registered voters, lack of timely posting of BSE meeting minutes, substantial omissions in the BSE meeting minutes, arbitrary determination of what constitutes an election challenge, and election code that does not support the challenge of an election.

On September 11, 2019 at approximately 4:00 o'clock I met with the City Clerk in order to obtain election registration documents, not financial documents, just registration documents -- the petitions, signatures, that kind of thing. The City Clerk and I composed an email together in her office to facilitate this. Two hours later, after receiving counsel, the City Clerk informed
me that in order to receive registration documents at least one MPIA would need to be filed with the City.

When I returned to the City Clerk's Office I was told that I would need to file one MPIA document with the City per candidate. It would have came to each one of their registration folders. Only after consulting Rockville City Code, Section 8-84, did I determine that an MPIA was not required, but rather, according to code -- and this is what the code states -- "these reports, statements, and accounts shall be subject and open to inspection by any citizen of the City during the hours in which the City Clerk's Office is open." This right under the Rockville City Code was denied to me until I cited it.

On September 12 I proceeded to the City Clerk's Office with a copy of the 8-84 code and was reluctantly granted access after further consultation with Rockville's City -- with the legal department. While receiving copies of registration documents I observed a candidate for
Rockville Mayor and/or Council enter the City Clerk's Office and proceed directly to the election files in the City Clerk's inner office, gaining unsupervised access to them. Upon review of the registration documents, which took several weeks of meticulous data collection, it was determined beyond a shadow of a doubt that at least two candidates, both on the same slate, had not been properly certified. One candidate only received 99 valid signatures while the other only had received only 92 valued signatures. A detailed document regarding these matters was copied to the Rockville BSE and City Clerk's Office on November 4, 2019.

Subsequently, that document was submitted to the BSE on November 7 in the form of a challenge to the 2019 election and that was within the prescribed timeframe of less than 48 hours after the certification of the election.

To verify the registration documents I returned to the City Clerk's Office September 26, 2019 and was told again that I would need to go
through a lengthy MPIA process to receive the requested documented. I again had to present a copy of 8-84. And having my cell phone ready to photograph the documents, I and a witness that accompanied me observed that the City Police had been called by the City Clerk in order to remove us from the City Clerk's Office and/or arrest us. The Rockville City Police Officer present determined that no crime had been committed and he left without confronting us in any way.

The BSE's November 11, 2019 election certification meeting, the BSE chair stated that my challenge letter was arbitrarily deemed as a letter of complaint and, yes, two of the invalid signatures of one of the candidate's signature petitions were indeed invalid, while the remaining signature, a person named Omi Razi (phonetic), was valid, thus making the total number of signatures for that candidate the minimum 100 and therefore his petition was valid. The chair stated that she had researched this with appropriate parties.

DR. NEUMAN: Mr. Powell, you have 15
seconds.

MR. POWELL: Great. The following day I met with Margaret Jurgensen, who stated that no one with that name was a registered voter and thus that person was not registered -- was -- thus the petitions were not valid. It took more than two months for the BSE November 11 meeting to be posted and when the posting came out there was no mention of what was mentioned in that November 11 meeting by the chair.

Lastly, no challenge or complaint can ever move through because once a candidate is certified, properly or not, it's impossible to remove that candidate from the ballot. So once the candidate is certified, there's nothing that can be done.

DR. NEUMAN: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Powell.

MR. POWELL: I will electronically submit all supporting documents and would certainly like to hear some response to these grave concerns.
DR. NEUMAN: Thank you, Mr. Powell. Are there any other comments?

MR. PERKINS: Hi, how are you doing? I'm Matt Perkins, a candidate in the recent election. First I'd like to thank and congratulate the Board for almost doubling turnout.

A couple of issues I'd like to discuss. One, given I think the unexpected success, especially in person voting on Election Day, perhaps the Board can examine having more polling places open in the next election on Election Day.

Second, I would reiterate the request of others that there be an examination of the number of ballots received, whether -- regardless of postmark date, after, because a ballot received I think is an indication of an intention to vote and whether it's user error or another cause that brings the vote in late, we should understand the scope and extent of the problem.

DR. NEUMAN: So you're suggesting?

MR. PERKINS: That the Board counts how
many ballots were received late and tries to see, you know, are there commonalities among those submitting ballots late.

DR. NEUMAN: Such as?

MR. PERKINS: Recency of registering as a voter. I don't know. Age of the voter. Trying to determine if there's any built in causes for ballots -- ballots being late.

And then the only other issue I would bring up is, as a candidate for the televised forums, my understanding is that all candidates were supposed to be invited to televised forums. I was not invited to the forum held by the Chamber of Commerce. Speaking with another late registering candidate who was not on the slate, I believe I was not the only person who did not receive an invitation to that forum. So would urge the Board to take whatever steps are necessary to make sure that all candidates are in fact invited and to confirm their invitations.

DR. NEUMAN: Did you talk to the City Manager's Office about that?
MR. PERKINS: I have not.

DR. NEUMAN: And that would be the place to talk to in terms of handling this issue.

MR. PERKINS: All right. Thank you.

DR. NEUMAN: Thank you.

MR. RUSSO: Thank you. I'm Vincent Russo. I was campaign treasurer for a city council candidate.

It was my first time doing that role, but I found the -- the materials, the spreadsheets that were prepared for the campaign to be very, very helpful, and easy to use.

One issue that some candidates encountered was in the case that for the initial pre-election report, if there were expenses that predated May 1, it was a little tricky getting those entered into the report because they fell outside of the -- the date that was formatted in the -- in the sheet.

My only other little peeve I guess about the -- the reporting format was, you know, many candidates have electronic donation services like
Paypal and each -- each one of those donations has a little nominal fee associated with them. And having to enumerate all those 50 cents, dollar, 75 cent fees was -- got a little -- little tedious. And I guess I would ask if maybe there is some way of -- you know, where candidates could aggregate all of those expenses on a single -- single line and -- and maybe satisfy the reporting requirement in that way.

I appreciated the note on the -- on the City website acknowledging the conflict of the Rockville City Code in terms of the compliance with the constitutional understanding no of aggregate donations being limited to $2,000. And I would encourage the Board to continue advocating for that change to be made to the Code to align with constitutional understanding.

Some of the discussion -- and I was really impressed with the Post Office's diligence that day of the election. I assume that is great if you were mailing your ballot into Rockville. I think we ought to consider also the possibility
that, you know, if people mailed their ballot from
their workplace or from -- from somewhere else --
I don't -- I don't know that we would necessarily
expect that same level of service. You know, if
you -- if you work in the District or somewhere
else and you mail your -- mail your ballot in on
-- on the Monday or Tuesday, I -- I guess I would
be curious to see of those ballots that came in on
the 6th or, you know, soon after, where were they
mailed from. That might be interesting to see.

And, finally, one question regarding the
-- the tabulation of results. There were
tabulations made by precinct, which is -- which
was nice, but I think, you know, we had some
questions about, you know, the anonymity of the
ballot and, you know, the understanding that the
-- the sleeve or the envelope had maybe some
identifying information, but the ballot itself was
-- was not -- did not have identifying
information. And, you know, I guess we're, you
know, wondering how -- how do results by precinct
get tabulated when the -- the ballot is anonymous.
And I guess I would --

DR. NEUMAN: Well, I can answer that one for you. We had ballot styles and the ballot styles were one through ten, but all of the ballots were exactly the same. The only difference was the number and when the -- when it went through the scanner, then it was tabulated by that ballot style.

MR. RUSSO: So the precinct was marked on the -- on the ballot?

DR. NEUMAN: Correct. Correct. And the ballot style, the correct ballot style was mailed accordingly. And then when it was tabulated it was tabulated by district.

MR. RUSSO: And for same day registrants, if they come they get the --

DR. NEUMAN: Ballot style --

MR. RUSSO: Appropriate to their --

DR. NEUMAN: To their address.

MR. RUSSO: -- home precinct?

DR. NEUMAN: Right.

MR. RUSSO: I think that's it. Thank
you.

DR. NEUMAN: Thank you.

MS. FEINBERG: Thank you very much. I just have two quick items.

One, and it's not under your purview I don't think, there were yard signs that were put out saying Election Day vote that were popping up about encouraging people to come out and vote that were done by the City, not by individual campaigns. But it appeared that the distribution or deployment of those was not done equally across the City on the same one or two or three days. Eventually, they appeared to be deployed across the City, but I think there needs to be some attention to the distribution, how that's done. Because, for example, in some parts of the City you would even see at two different intersections the same vote for the elections, and then you would go to other parts of the City and it was a dearth of them.

So it's just a comment about the distribution and deployment. Again, I don't know
if it's here or through public works did the
deployment of those. I'm assuming that's who did
it, but I don't know for sure.

And the second one please is on the
ballots. And this is something that a resident
brought to me and I have discussed it with the
City Clerk at the time. If somebody were out of
the country during the period of the elections,
how do they send those back since it's postage
paid -- and maybe the Post Office can help me.
Specifically we reached out about somebody was
going -- a family that was going to be out of the
country the entire time and they would not have
received it until very late. How could they have
returned it? Are postage paid envelopes -- I
don't believe from overseas would work.

DR. NEUMAN: The would probably have to
put on sufficient postage from whatever country
they were in in order for it to come --

MS. FEINBERG: Right. But there were no
instructions, they had no idea -- we worked with
this family, but it was an issue. And I thought I
had heard that this is a problem nationally that
the vote by mail folks are aware of. And I think,
Sara, you and I had actually talked about it.

DR. NEUMAN: There's a solution, it's
not a hard one, it's just we have to know there is
said problem. And so we don't have that many
people that have that situation. We did much as
we could with frequently asked questions that we
thought would reach the broad audience. But
anybody who had a question that didn't -- wasn't
covered in frequently asked questions, for
anything, was certainly welcome to call. And we
did have a call line that started early on and it
was always available, and we got back to people
very quickly.

MS. FEINBERG: Well, one of the
solutions I had -- had heard might be was the
deployment. Once the ballots were received, if
you were still in town that you could come and
pick it up. And I believe that was one we were
trying to work with the family. It didn't
actually work out. So that's a suggestion for
your consideration, if somebody knows they will be leaving and if the ballots -- they'll be away during that window when they are sent of the City, can they come and pick it up. And it's just a suggestion moving forward.

DR. NEUMAN: Well, that was -- that's my point, which is if we hear of an issue, of a concern that someone has, we'll do what we can to work it out so that they can get their ballot and be able to turn it in in a timely fashion.

MS. FEINBERG: Well, we did try and it didn't work out because the ballots weren't here.

DR. NEUMAN: No?

MS. FEINBERG: But I'm just asking for your understanding that there are people who are out overseas.

DR. NEUMAN: Yes, thank you.

MAYOR NEWTON: Thank you. I want to say thank you for moving the City in this direction. I think it was absolutely affirmed by the increase in the number of people who were able to participate. That is wonderful.
I look forward to receiving the final cost and the breakdown and how it all comes out. Not that I think we count what we spend per vote, but I think it's -- it's instructive to not just the City of Rockville, but anybody else who is, you know, anticipating or -- or moving in this direction.

Number two, I think in the beginning we heard that there were 44,000 registered voters in the City, but at one point the number dropped to 38,000. But I'm curious how the culling happened. That's 6,000 voters potentially. And so what information did you use to get to that number, 38,000? I don't know if you're going to answer the question this evening, but it would be helpful to those candidates to have the -- the list culled because in several cases when we knocked in doors, one in particular there were four ballots going to that house and none of those individuals lived there anymore. So this came up after the 2015 campaign when several candidates requested that the City use neighborhood services to do a 
strategic neighborhood by neighborhood sweep of the City to say, you know, who lives here now, not for any reason other than trying to get a better handle on who was living where. The census will help us and I hope we will use the census information to help that list, but as has been mentioned before, people move and not everyone knows that they need to let their previous jurisdiction know. Sometimes when you register to vote in a new jurisdiction you come off of a previous list, but not always. And in the case of someone passing away, that can take years for that to catch up.

And so I -- I just think we as a City need to do a better job of trying to help our community know the reason for letting the BOSE know. And then if they let the Rockville BOSE know, how long does it take for the county and the state to know?

Secondly -- or third, I would support a discussion on the involvement of staff in the three appointed offices being involved in
campaigns. It is everyone's right to support whatever candidate they choose, however, when you are working on an election from a City standpoint, trying to help it be as fair and impartial as possible, it does raise the perception perhaps of questions. And I wouldn't want anyone to be in that position, so I think the fact that this City announced a change in what had previously been a City policy after the campaign started, it made for some very uncomfortable situations.

And, finally, I think -- and it's been evidenced in several of the BOSE meetings -- I think it would be instructive for a discussion about the BOSE. You are the liaison to the candidates actually. Also, you are our source of information. And tonight is the first time I heard, when Mike asked the question, how did you know what precinct. Some of that information is just helpful to everyone to know how -- you know, there was a great deal of concern about signing your name and then the tear off flap. But if people knew the way we're going to know that
precinct 10 voted is because we've got it calibrated that way, it -- it helps. Information -- you know, knowledge is power. And when there is a new thing happening, everybody tends to jump to conclusions. And the more information that we get out there in the beginning the better, or along the way, the better. And I found personally in this campaign session, both as a sitting elected person and then as a candidate, that the door to the BOSE was rigidly closed and not a way of actually communicating, not just to the elected and the candidates, but to the community.

So I would hope that going forward we would have a much more robust and informative two way street.

DR. NEUMAN: The only thing I can comment on -- not the only thing, but what I will comment on is the Board of Supervisors of Elections was out and about in the community. At whatever events that the City had we were there at a booth, we were interacting with as many people as we could and as many sessions as we could and
as many places as we could. We did outreach in
homeowners' associations and other organizations
to talk about vote by mail and answer any
questions for people.

MAYOR NEWTON: Actually, (inaudible).

DR. NEUMAN: Okay. And the one thing
about the flaps, we know the flaps were new this
time around for everybody, and so that was new for
us as well. And so we have learned from that --
everything that happened, for the next time
around. And that's the name -- that's what
happens, you do something the first time, you
learn and you adjust for the next time. So we
thank you for your input into helping us do that.

Anybody else? Please. And if anybody
-- if people --

SPEAKER: If anybody hasn't spoken --

DR. NEUMAN: No, I was thinking of
people from the League of Women Votes, if anybody
is here and does want to say anything, they -- I'm
not -- I'm just --

MS. COHN: I have just a few more things
I want to share.

DR. NEUMAN: Absolutely.

MS. COHN: Thank you. My name is Linda Cohn with the League of Women Voters, as Brigitta mentioned. And I'm chairing a committee that is looking at all mail in voting and the experience with that. So we're looking at some other states, because it's used across the board in Oregon, Washington, and Colorado, and I think Hawaii is just starting as well. And we're looking at -- we're trying to look at both the pros and cons. So what are the advantages, what are the disadvantages of that. It has a reputation for increasing voter participation, which is good. There's also questions about maintaining security and the integrity of the vote. This way we'll understand both sides of that.

We're pretty new in the process, probably going to go for -- through 2020 probably is my guess. And the League always prepares -- any part that we prepare we may or may not have recommendations or establish a position. We can;
we don't know yet if we will on this. But when we
do write a report, it does get posted on line, so
it's accessible. We're also happy to hear from
people, the experiences on that. We hope we can
have some continued conversations with -- with
City of Rockville and we'll also be talking with
the County. And we're just in the information
gathering state and trying to understand both what
works and what doesn't work, because there's
always two sides to every issue.

Thank you.

DR. NEUMAN: Very good. Thank you.

MS. MULLICAN: Thank you. One of the
things that I've found going door to door --
because you know, I delivered like 13,000 of my
campaign literature, and that is we have a lot of
new renters in Rockville and they don't know
anything about Rockville elections. And so, of
course, as Dr. Neuman said, that we did a great
job in reaching out to these people. And what I
found is that they love the voter guide that the
City sent, which was in the newsletter. And a lot
of times I would alert them to it because they were new. I said, hey, all the information is in there. They didn't even know there was an election, okay. So, as you said, we reached out to a lot of people if they were home.

My -- my concern is still that database. If you go door to door -- all the candidates can vouch for this -- that -- the bad addresses. And I actually had one -- two deaths that were still on the list and the spouse would tell me, oh, my husband died 12 years ago and one was 7 years ago. In fact, the one gentleman said he didn't care if -- if that was still on the list. And I said well, I care. So I actually wrote a letter and had them sign it. And the Board of Elections -- they're very, very helpful -- they took these two people off.

One experience I found was someone put a ballot on the mailbox with a paper clip and wrote no longer live here. So I thought to myself, why is it they got a ballot if they had three mailings. And that brings me to the conclusion --
what I heard from a lot of people, and I even agree with, the three mailings that the voter received looked like advertising and people threw it away. And that's sad. But I know you couldn't do a first class mailing like I did to, you know, a small amount, but I did find a lot of returned addresses. So something to consider is those three mailings were ignored by a lot of people. My concern is we candidates would get lists where there are so many names that should have been purged. And you have no way of knowing of all those mailings that you did, how many of them got off.

I was curious to hear the Mayor say that the list went from 44,000 to 38,000. I don't recall seeing my list purged like that, but it's -- it's an issue as a candidate trying to decide how many voters you mail to, because obviously you can't mail to everyone. So that's an issue that I don't think you all can control. I think it's the Board of Elections, but I just think the City should be a little bit more involved and get some
feedback of those three mailings. How many did
you all -- you know, even a list, these are the
voters that were purged. And I don't think you
get that and I personally, as a candidate, would
have wanted to see that. But it might not ever
happen, but it's just something that I would like
to bring to the attention. It's very frustrating
for candidates not to have good lists. And I can
-- I'm sure they can all tell you they went to a
lot of houses and these lists that we had were
very, very bad. And it's just not something that
I can blame you all on.

DR. NEUMAN: Well, we tried -- we tried
very hard and made a major effort to work with the
county and the county indeed worked with us that
every time we did a mailing and those -- those
mailers came back, we bundled them and took them
back to the county so that they could then update
the list. And we used very mailing in that
fashion. And so then they purged the database
based on each mailing. So the next one that we
had should have not gone to some of those names
that came back the first one or the second one.

So the intent was that by the last mailing we should have the best database that we could possibly have.

MS. MULLICAN: Like I said, they threw those mailings in the trash because they thought it was advertising.

DR. NEUMAN: Yes.

MS. MULLICAN: Not everyone.

DR. NEUMAN: Yes.

MS. MULLICAN: But a lot of them. It's just reality.

DR. NEUMAN: Well, that -- but -- but it meant the address was still a good address, the person still lived at that address.

MS. MULLICAN: No.

DR. NEUMAN: No?

MS. MULLICAN: The new people who lived there just ignored those.

DR. NEUMAN: So the new -- so there was --

MS. MULLICAN: And the might not even
have been registered.

DR. NEUMAN: So there was an -- there was a mailing that came to a name at an address, there was now a different name at that address and the new person did not bring the old -- the old name to the attention of anybody. Mm-hmm.

Problem. Because if we don't get it back, how do we know that somebody else is living there?

MS. MULLICAN: Yeah, I'm only sharing this because I talked to a lot of people and I would say didn't you get your mailing, because we're having vote by mail. It's the first thing that everybody -- first time everybody knew. And they said no and I said here, did you get one of these. Oh, I threw that in the trash. I didn't realize that's -- you know, it was important.

I'm just saying that it looked like --

DR. NEUMAN: We've got two different thoughts here. One is did the mailing go to the right person at that address and they didn't pay attention to it, or did the mailing go to a person that no longer lived at that address and the
current resident just threw it away.

    MS. MULLICAN: Yeah.

    DR. NEUMAN: And if that second thing is the case, that's a problem for trying to identify that, because if people do not give it back to us, we don't know -- well, it's two things. We don't know that the person is no longer at that address, but, secondly, it's the responsibility of the mover -- the person who no longer lives there needs to let the Board of Elections know that they've moved, because their name needs to be change don the state register so that they can vote in the other elections in the state. Now, if they've moved out of the state, then hopefully it will be caught by the overall system that compares states and says you've got somebody registered in two states, let's the sending state know, and they will take them off the data -- the database.

    MS. MULLICAN: I have one more small -- small story to tell. I know it's not a lot, but a friend of mine who voted went to -- was at a rehab and asked me to pick up her mail. And I picked up
her mail, brought it to her at the rehab, and I'm sitting there with her and she's like tearing up all the campaign literature. I'm not even reading it, just throwing it away. She said I already voted. And she said, oh, I got another ballot, oh, I got another ballot. She had four ballots in her pack before we realized it wasn't her mail. I said, oh, my god. So I took it to the Post Office. It was a mistake. I didn't even think to look. I just said I'm picking up -- because I had a, you know, written letter, approval to pick up her mail and take it to her at the rehab. And I thought, oh, my god, you know, if somebody wasn't honest like me they could have just thrown it away or whatever.

Anyway, I mean it was a mistake, but it's like how -- how can you be assured that everybody gets their ballot? There are things that happen with vote by mail. I'm just bringing that out. It's just a minor thing, but it was upsetting to me as a candidate. And I took it back to the clerk and -- and I said, you -- you've
got to remember I want these votes, so please get these to the right address.

So it happens.

DR. NEUMAN: Well, we're also dependent upon the receiver of the mail and the voter themselves to make sure that we have the accurate information about them. We don't want to purge -- as you know, we don't purge the database excessively unless we have evidence that someone is not -- does not live there, because then we're accused of removing voters -- anybody that's doing this would be accused of removing voters arbitrarily. And we don't ever want that to happen.

So we err on the side of caution and a name stays on the database. And if the address is wrong, the address is wrong, but we have no way of knowing it unless somebody lets us know, which would be the person who's currently at the address, right, who's getting mail for the wrong person, or the person themselves should take it on and say I've changed my address.
Now, when we've talked to people that come into the -- into the polling place and they will say I changed my address in this place, oh, by I forgot to change it for voting. And it's a very common event. People know certain places and they will change their address there but forget to do it with voting. So it's not uncommon, but if we can, again, educate the voters to make sure if they move to let us know.

You had a comment?

MS. ORLOSKY: I had a clarification question on the first item you talked about, the database purge. Do I understand it correctly that you as a candidate, or as the representative of a candidate, for those others here, would find it more convenient if the City notified registered candidates each time the City has submitted a list of invalid addresses to the state for the cleaning -- or to the county for the cleaning of the database? Do I understand it correctly or am I misinterpreting it?

MS. MULLICAN: Well, as a candidate we
were given two databases, one in May, which was very, very bad, which is what I used for my first --

MS. ORLOSKY: That's before the mailings, yes.

MS. MULLICAN: And then I just went to the county and purchased one, which was dated July, which was better. But then I was trying to compare it to the one that the City was giving us, it's very detailed information, it's very difficult. People move -- I mean it's -- it's a database that changes daily and it's -- I don't -- there no real easy solution. But if you're talking about 43,000 to 38,000, I would love to have known -- I would have loved to have had -- been able to compare to see what those others were. Were the ones that you all were purged? And then there's the active and inactive. It's -- it's a very complicated database. But it's frustrating when you don't know what you're getting and how up to date it is.

And I would love know how many ballots
were received that weren't counted, as -- as was mentioned by other people in the room. That I think is information the City should know. I really do, you know. But that's just the personal opinion I agree with.

Thank you.

DR. NEUMAN: Again, we work closely -- one more time, the database belongs to the state and the state is very protective as to who has access to that database, again, because of the all the legalities of removing a name incorrectly.

The county then has access to that database. We then work with the county to have access to it, but we do not have direct access to the database, so we don't make changes. We try to submit -- we did work very hard through four mailings to update the data -- to give it to the county to update the database and they did because each mailing we would get fewer back.

So we know they did what they did, but we don't know if it was perfect. And, apparently, from what you're telling us it wasn't. And we can
certainly share it with the county, but it is --
was our belief that we had one of the cleanest
databases we've ever had.

SPEAKER: True.

DR. NEUMAN: Not perfect yet, we're
working on it. But we are better than we were. I
assure you we are better -- you -- I remember when
several of us counted the number of ballots that
-- the number of sample ballots that came back,
and it was in the thousands. And it was not
anywhere near that this time. But we still had
some come back and the goal is always to decrease
that number.

Any other questions, comments? Yes.

MS. ASHTON: Monique Ashton again. I'm
just thinking out loud, and I think this goes
beyond the City of Rockville, but there are a
number of partnerships between jurisdictions that
help. So if you think about MCPS, partners -- and
does help with the voting, getting folks
registered to vote -- and the DMV also has a way
for either organ donation and voting.
I'm just wondering, since a lot of us understand that when people they move they think about changing their bank information, they think about, you know, the core things essential to their daily lives, and they may not think about updating their voter registration information. Is there a partnership that could be had, because a lot of people will do a change of address with the U.S. Postal Service and people can check off to say would you also like to update your, you know, voter registration information. I'm just -- I know that goes beyond the City of Rockville, but it seems like that could be tremendously helpful because it's using a natural tool that people are commonly using.

DR. NEUMAN: Absolutely. Yes, absolutely. And it works with -- with the Department of Motor Vehicles as well, and the county and the state have worked hard to put all that together. So we are just benefitting by the work that they've done because we're using the same database.
MS. ASHTON: Great suggestion. One other quick -- may I --

SPEAKER: Go ahead.

DR. NEUMAN: What's wrong?

MR. NICHOLS: Again, Don Nichols from the Postal Service. And I appreciate the -- the thought. One of the issues for us with -- we -- we walk a very fine line as it relates to voter registration and voter turnout. For us that's considered in many states a partisan issue and we generally don't dive into anything that could be seen as -- as partisan.

MS. ASHTON: Well, would the DMV help with voter registration? So I was just thinking that there are other state and other agencies that do help with helping to register folks and keep information valid. Maybe the DMV would do it.

(Laughter)

MAYOR NEWTON: So I just wanted to add, you know, to the point that I think is underlying candidates' concerns about lists is the expense. When you're using shoe leather, it's not -- it's
-- it's expensive and it's time consuming, but it's not as expensive as when you're mailing. And I -- I think it is well worth noting that this was a much more expensive campaign for candidates this year. And I'm not putting a dollar value on it. Once again, I'm not trying to say that, but I just think we want to be encouraging not just of everyone participating from the voting side, but of everyone being able to participate from the candidate's side. And we need to keep that in mind in terms of the efficacy of the -- of the list.

And the other thing I just wanted to point out, I don't know how many people told me -- and I think Election Day itself showed us this -- how many people actually enjoy the process of coming to vote and seeing people. There were a lot of people who spoke and said, you know, I really missed going to my polling place, seeing my neighbors, chatting it up. We -- we're so -- you know, moving these days in different directions and not really communicating and -- and having
time together. So I think that's something else
that we should note.

And, Vincent, I'm sorry, I called you
Mike. Sorry. Just wasn't thinking.

DR. NEUMAN: And we would like to hear
from those people as well.

Any other comments? Yes?

MR. PIERZCHALA: Thank you. Mark
Pierzchala again. One of the most valuable things
you all did was to post the voter IDs of those
people who had submitted ballots. And -- and we
used that to -- you know, we had a -- a program
that would eliminate them from the next mailing,
right, and that was helpful to reduce cost, but
also to reduce aggravation on somebody who voted
two weeks ago. I -- I just think it could have
been clearer about when those lists would have
been posted, you know, because we just had to keep
watching to see when they were posted and if --
you know, if there could be a regular schedule or
-- or just some sort of information about, you
know, 5:00 p.m. on such and such days you are
getting your list. That kind of thing would have been helpful.

DR. NEUMAN: Yes.

MR. PIERZCHALA: We were watching it, but it would have been helpful if --

DR. NEUMAN: Yes.

MR. PIERZCHALA: Okay. Anyway, that's a good thing to reduce costs.

DR. NEUMAN: There were -- there were some things we had control over, there were some things we could mediate on, and there were some things we had no control over. So we worked with the best we could to get -- do the best -- very best we could for the City of Rockville.

Any other? Yes.

MR. RUSSO: Just following on what Mark said about the posting of the posting of the voters that have voted, not only was it helpful for the candidates to know, I think it was also very helpful for the voters to know that the City got their vote and it was sort of a receipt, because this as a big leap of faith that you're
going to drop your ballot in the mail.

DR. NEUMAN: Sure.

MR. RUSSO: I think it was very reassuring for many people to -- to check that list and see that their name appeared. So not only from the perspective of the candidates, but I think the voters also appreciated that.

DR. NEUMAN: So it's a good process, we just have to tighten it up some?

MR. RUSSO: Well, I mean --

DR. NEUMAN: Right? Get it out sooner or -- yes?

MR. RUSSO: You know, I imagine you're at the mercy of the county there too to -- how often it's counted and when.

DR. NEUMAN: Right, right. Right.

Thank you. It's okay.

MR. PIERZCHALA: Can't let this one go so easily. I will say I do know of people who actually looked at those lists to see if their ballot had been received. So, you know, some people monitor their own ballot that way.
DR. NEUMAN: Good.

MS. MULLICAN: That brings the question about the history data. When will the database be available that shows all the people that voted in Rockville? Because I'm still trying to compare voters who I mailed to to how many actually voted. And I know in the past elections it's been an issue with the Board of Elections saying, well, it depends on the state and it's usually like three months after the election that you can get that information. And when I asked the Board of Elections -- Montgomery County Board of Elections, I was told that the -- that is a control of the City -- the history data. In other words, I tried to get the history data.

DR. NEUMAN: I hear you and -- and --

MS. MULLICAN: And I think you all might change that if I heard -- I mean the Board of Elections would not give us a list of who voted in the previous three elections. We had to get that from the City and we only got two -- two databases from you all, one in May and one in the end of
September, I believe. So I wanted to see the data for the last three elections, getting it from the --

DR. NEUMAN: I understand your question, but I truly don't have an answer.

MS. MULLICAN: Okay.

DR. NEUMAN: But we'll pursue and we'll see what we --

MS. MULLICAN: Okay, thank you.

MS. FEINBERG: Thank you. Beryl Feinberg. I wanted to speak about the campaign finance report.

I want to echo and ditto what everyone has said, what an improvement it was, but I also want to give a thanks both to the City staff, as well as specifically the IT staff, because if you did, as the example was before, if you had information you need to do before -- I think May 11 was the early or cutoff date -- there was a way to do it, you just had to work with staff, but they were very helpful and you could be figured out. And as well as if you had campaign funds
from a prior election, not this cycle, it did
accommodate all those kind of nuances and it
worked out great.

And thank you to the staff for that.

DR. NEUMAN: Absolutely. And thank you
for commenting, because a tremendous amount of
work went into that, especially by Graham sitting
over here on my left, who worked very closely with
the staff. And we did three workshops, as you
know, so that candidates and their treasurers
could come in repeatedly to be exposed and have
practice with using the revision. So it's always
good to know that when you do something like that
-- when it works.

Any more comments? Yes.

MS. ONLEY: I just want to congratulate
each and every one of you and the City staff
because, you know, all eyes were on Rockville, and
the election was very successful. I think it was
very well run. There were some lessons learned,
but I think the next election will run much
smoother and I think that we proved to a lot of
people, especially the State of Maryland, that vote by mail is the way to go. And I just want to congratulate you on that.

Oh, I'm Virginia Onley. (Laughter)

That would help.

DR. NEUMAN: Thank you. Thank you.

And, of course, we're setting our sights higher for the next time around. We want to keep all those people that currently voted and then add more, so we hope that will happen in the next election.

Any other comments, questions, concerns, suggestions?

Well, you know where to find us. And we have a comment box in the box. We've given you a survey form and we welcome, absolutely welcome your input because you are the recipients of all the work that we do. And so if it's not working in some way we need to know it. And if you have suggestions for things perhaps we didn't think of, we want to hear from everybody.

So, yes, and so the survey -- please,
you have a survey. It looks like this; you picked it up when you came in. If you would let us know your thoughts about what you see for the future, suggestions that you want to give us, there's another way to do it. And there's a box in the back that you can leave it in when you if you choose to turn it in that way.

Well, hearing no other comments, you can certainly, if you think of anything, or if you have more that you want to tell us, or anything that you've said tonight, if you want to send it in to us, we will do our best to get back to you, as we always do by -- yes, we need everything by February the 29th.

MR. JOHNSON: There will be the further opportunity on a weekend.

DR. NEUMAN: Yes, so -- so the next -- you can come in on the -- for the next forum, which is February the --

MR. JOHNSON: The 8th.

DR. NEUMAN: February the 8th. And if you get us information by February the 29th that's
about when we'll be pulling everything together.
But if you think of anything after having heard
other people, when you kind of go oh, yeah, I
forgot to say that, please send it to us. We're
pretty good about reading everything and getting
responses back to you. We may not be able to do
anything about it, but we do want to hear your
suggestions and try.

So we thank you all very much for coming
and for all the comments that you made and all the
suggestions you had and any concerns. And if you
wish to come Saturday, we'll see you then,
otherwise have a good year.

(Whereupon, the HEARING was
adjourned.)

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I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the foregoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

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