

JUNE 9, 2020

The Board of Chaves County Commissioners held a Special Commission Meeting in the Commission Chamber of the Joe Skeen Building, #1 St. Mary's Place in Roswell, New Mexico. Chairman Cavin called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. Commissioner Corn led the pledge and Commissioner Ezzell led in prayer. Those present were Commissioners Bilberry, Dana, Ezzell, Corn and Chairman Cavin by telephone. Also present were County Manager Stan Riggs, Public Services Director Bill Williams, County Treasurer Charlotte Andrade, County Clerk Dave Kunko, news media, staff and guests.

CANVASS OF 2020 PRIMARY ELECTION

Chaves County Clerk Dave Kunko thanked his staff for all the hours they have been working in preparation for the Primary Election. He then thanked the poll workers and stated elections do not happen without them. Lastly, he thanked Fernando at the Post Office for help and understanding on the importance of ballots and other election mail. Mr. Kunko briefly went over the canvas with the summary totals of the votes in Chaves County. Mr. Kunko then referred to two pages that showed Early Vote, Absentee and Election Day turnout statistics. He stated there were 3,077 early voters, 4,357 absentee, 3,248 election day, 89 provisional ballots and 6 UOCAVA (Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act). He added that 48% of the eligible Republicans voted, 30% of the eligible Democrats voted and 15% of the eligible Libertarians voted. In all the turnout was 41% of those eligible to vote. Mr. Kunko stated that 1-12-25.4H NMSA allows the Clerk's Office to qualify, open, tally and document the provisional ballots prior to the canvass. He stated only 12 of the 101 provisional ballots were disqualified. He added that 6 of the disqualified were because the presiding judge at the polling place failed to provide envelopes for the ballots which are mandatory in the qualifying process. Mr. Kunko then pointed out a page provided to the Commissioners that compared the 2016 Primary Election turnout numbers with the 2020 numbers. Commissioner Dana stated she is sad they don't get to go through 89 provisional envelopes like they did 2 years ago. Commissioner Dana mentioned the absentee and receiving them late. She believes this is not the best way to get this done. She mentioned all the applications returned not deliverable. Here we are a week later, and Bernalillo and Santa Fe Counties are still a mess. Mr. Kunko stated almost 1500 applications were returned undeliverable and we do get charged postage for those as well as the applications and ballots that are postage paid. Mr. Kunko told the Commission they were keeping a running total of postage for possible reimbursement. Chief Deputy Clerk Cindy Fuller provided the election cost including postage. The current postage total is \$8,193.00. We will submit for reimbursement for over \$39,000 which includes poll workers pay. Mr. Kunko stated it appears as though the State would like to do mail ballot elections. If this happens, we need to make sure it includes signature verification software. Because of the number of absentee ballots processed in this Primary it would have been nice to already have signature verification software in place. We have got to verify that the qualified voter is the one signing the absentee ballot envelope. Commissioner Cavin agreed this election had issues with the absentee ballot application being mailed to all qualified voters. There must be safeguards in place. Commissioner Corn mentioned a friend of his in the Senate lost his race and 4 years after the election a ballot box was found that would have changed the outcome in his favor. Mailing ballots without the voters requesting them is not a good plan. The large number of undeliverable applications shows that we need to change the law on purging voters from the roll. He believes with some fine tuning, mailing applications is not terrible. He agreed the next step would be signature verification software. With all the Covid-19 issues he thinks the election went very well and he appreciates the efforts of the Clerk's Office and poll workers. This type of turnout shows that people are concerned and willing to voice their opinion. During the week before the election he encouraged people he knew to deliver their absentee ballots back to the Clerk's Office and not drop it in the mail. Commissioner Ezzell asked those present to join him in thanking the Clerk's Office and clapped in appreciation of their efforts. Mr. Kunko thanked him for that. Mr. Kunko stated staff recommends approval of the canvass. Commissioner Corn moved to accept the canvass results in total. Commissioner Dana seconded the motion. A voice vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

UNSCHEDULED COMMUNICATIONS

Rita Kane Doerhoefer stated she was the Presiding Judge at the West Country Club Church of Christ. In the poll worker training, Safety & Compliance Manager Tim Salazar did a great job instructing

them on PPE and how to protect themselves. The Clerk's Office support was marvelous. She mentioned issues at the polling place. She stated she called the Secretary of State's Office in reference to absentee ballots. She instructed 27 people to vote their absentee ballot. Numerous voters changed their voter registrations. Some voters mentioned problems with their voter registration due to the MVD.

MANAGER COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Riggs stated the next Regular Commission Meeting would be next Thursday, June 18th at 9:00 a.m. and there would be an IHC meeting at 8:30 a.m. prior to the Commission Meeting. The public hearing for County Roads will be at this meeting.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMUNICATIONS

Commissioner Corn stated elections are always very interesting. He was not surprised by the local outcomes, but there were some surprises around the State. It appears voters are more active. Now we get ready for November.

Commissioner Dana thanked the Clerk's Office and poll workers and stated not all Counties have great workers like Chaves County. She mentioned the special session coming up and to hang on to your wallets. This election experiment did not work well. Voter rolls must be improved as shown in this election where everyone received an absentee application. She thanked Rita Kane Doerhoefer for sharing her experiences at the polls.

Commissioner Ezzell thanked the Clerk's Office. This was an unprecedented year in reference to the number of absentee ballots. Chaves County on election night had 100% of their precincts reported by 10:30p.m. He congratulated the newly elected officials.

Commissioner Cavin thanked Commissioner Bilberry for being the chairman while he has been out of town. He congratulated Commissioner Bilberry and Cindy Fuller on winning their elections. He thanked the Clerk's Office, Rita Kane Doerhoefer and the poll workers. God Bless America.

Chairman Bilberry stated this election was a learning experience. We will take those experiences and press forward. He thanked everyone for their hard work.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:41p.m.



Dave Kunko

Dave Kunko
County Clerk

BOARD OF CHAVES COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

William E. Cavin

William E. Cavin, Chairman

Jeff Bilberry

Jeff Bilberry, Vice-Chairman

Dara Dana

Dara Dana, Member

T. Calder Ezzell Jr.

T. Calder Ezzell Jr., Member

Robert Corn

Robert Corn, Member