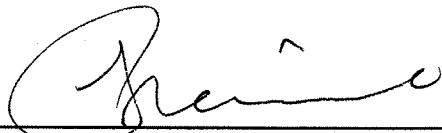


FRANKLIN COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
280 EAST BROAD STREET
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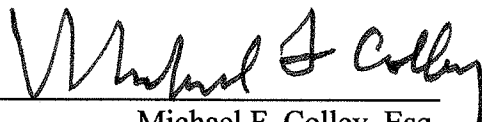
MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON
7-22-08

APPROVED ON 9-8-08

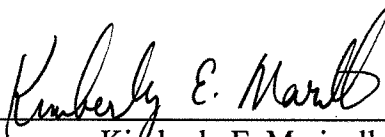
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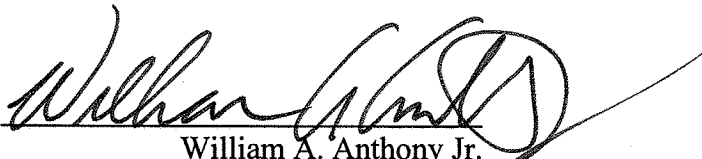
Douglas J. Preisse, Chairman



Michael F. Colley, Esq.




Kimberly E. Marinello



William A. Anthony Jr.

ATTEST:



Michael Stinziano, Director

1 ALSO PRESENT:

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Ms. Katherine Thomsen

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Mr. Eric Nickolas,

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Mr. Todd Wedekind

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2 P R O C E E D I N G S

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4 CHAIRMAN PREISSE: We will call
5 the meeting to order.

6 MR. WHITE: Roll call vote.

7 Ms. Marinello?

8 MS. MARINELLO: Yes.

9 MR. WHITE: Mr. Anthony?

10 MR. ANTHONY: Here.

11 MR. WHITE: Mr. Colley?

12 MR. COLLEY: Here.

13 MR. WHITE: Mr. Chairman?

14 CHAIRMAN PREISSE: Here.

15 MR. WHITE: All members are
16 present, Mr. Chairman.

17 MR. DAMSCHRODER: The agenda for
18 today focuses exclusively on moving
19 in-person absentee and provisional voting
20 out of Memorial Hall to another location.

21 As you will recall from our
22 discussion at our previous board meeting
23 we were overwhelmed here in these
24 facilities, not just inside for voting and

1 inside for queuing but outside for
2 parking. We were not able to handle the
3 volume of people we had in the primary,
4 let alone the people we expect for the
5 fall. So moving to an offsite location,
6 we believe, is desirable.

7 Staff has examined two different
8 locations. The first is Vets Memorial.
9 As we discussed at our previous meeting,
10 there were a couple of questions about
11 conflicts with time.

12 At this point Vets has worked
13 out the details such that if we do choose
14 to vote at Vets, we will not have to move
15 our equipment at any time during the 35
16 days of voting. From the time we set up
17 until the time we tear down, we will be in
18 that room and be able to secure it every
19 night and not have to worry about tearing
20 it down.

21 The charge for Vets is about
22 \$30,000 for the rental of the space. And
23 there is no charge for parking at all.

24 City Center -- I didn't grab the

1 stuff -- but the rental is about \$43,000
2 for the space and they are also going to
3 charge us for parking. We would also have
4 to put T1 lines into City Center in order
5 to have our computers there up on our
6 network. That site is on the county
7 network, so we don't have to worry about
8 that.

9 There is a little bit of
10 disagreement among Staff of what is the
11 optimum location. Todd Wedekind, the
12 manager of our absentee department, came
13 back from vacation this afternoon so he
14 could brief you on his views and answer
15 any questions you might have.

16 I don't know if you guys want to
17 ask Todd questions or ask Denny and I
18 questions, but I think that's pretty much
19 the facts.

20 MR. WHITE: I just have a follow
21 up. I think both sites will work. As
22 Matt pointed out and the commissioners
23 both pointed out, going to the City Center
24 will be a little more expensive.

1 My concern is that we catch a
2 lot of grief when we move someone's point
3 location on an election date just across
4 the street or within a building or within
5 the same facility. From door to door
6 between where we have been voting early
7 here to Vets is one mile. Plus there is
8 the river barrier.

9 A lot of early voters are using
10 public transportation or their two feet to
11 get here. I am concerned about that.

12 I have voiced my concerns to the
13 County Administrator and the Assistant
14 County Administrator about the possible
15 effect of going from here to a facility a
16 mile away door to door, what type of
17 effect that could have on voters who are
18 used to coming here. It doesn't seem like
19 a concern on their part, but I have voiced
20 my opinion to them.

21 I think the county officials
22 would rather see us at Vets. That's my
23 position on it.

24 I have voiced my concern. Maybe

1 I am a little overly concerned because
2 Matt and I and my staff are the ones that
3 get the calls on crunch day. If we move
4 somebody across the street they complain,
5 or within one facility they still
6 complain.

7 The distance of a mile could
8 create some type of voter concerns on
9 election day. So that's all I can do is
10 voice my concern.

11 Matt and I are the ones that
12 will get the calls and the Staff gets the
13 calls if we do move locations. But also
14 as Matt said, Todd, the manager in charge
15 of our absentees, also has a concern.

16 But like I say, both
17 facilities will work. And one fact we do
18 know is that this facility here will not
19 accommodate us any more because of the
20 volume.

21 Todd, do you want to add
22 anything?

23 MR. WEDEKIND: I agree with what
24 Denny is saying. I think both facilities

1 would accommodate us.

2 I feel we would service the
3 voters more appropriately if we were at
4 City Center. I feel it will be more
5 confusing for the voters to go to Vets
6 Memorial.

7 It's not going to be somewhere
8 where they can just pull up to the door
9 and walk in. There are going to be
10 several other events going on at the same
11 time at Vets Memorial and there will be
12 people all over the place. They are going
13 to have to go through a walkway and
14 upstairs. They are going to have to go
15 around several different areas to get to
16 the voting location.

17 The one I saw they were posing
18 doesn't really have accommodations for
19 electricity for us either. There will be
20 cords all over the place.

21 City Center has plenty of room.
22 There's room for people to line up and
23 down all over the place. There's not a
24 whole lot going on at the City Center.

1 The location that we picked is
2 more secure and easier to maintain. I
3 think we would really service the voters
4 much better if we were to go to the City
5 Center location.

6 I think it would be too
7 confusing to go to Vets. That's my
8 opinion. That's what I am worried about,
9 the confusion at Vets Memorial, finding
10 the location with all the other events
11 going on. Being confusing to voters,
12 that's my biggest concern.

13 MR. WHITE: I will just finish
14 off by saying both facilities will work.
15 All three commissioners are on the ballot
16 this year. If they are not concerned
17 about moving the voting place from here to
18 a mile way, I don't really think the Board
19 should get in a disagreement with the
20 commissioners on this issue.

21 I think the commissioners want
22 us at Vets. Both facilities will work.

23 MS. MARINELLO: Todd, I think
24 they are going to be upset anyway just

1 going anywhere from here. So you might
2 want to get them used to it anyway.

3 CHAIRMAN PREISSE: Do you wish
4 to answer? I don't know if that was a
5 statement or question.

6 MR. WEDEKIND: I still think it
7 will be closer to the Board and easier to
8 notify people at City Center Mall. I
9 think that's more identifiable than Vet's
10 Memorial. I think more people have been
11 to City Center than they have to Vet's
12 Memorial.

13 CHAIRMAN PREISSE: As
14 compelling, you mentioned the on-site
15 access.

16 Is there an overwhelming or
17 compelling set of obstacles at Vets that
18 doesn't exist at City Center? As my
19 recollection serves, we are dealing with
20 two facilities, multiple levels with
21 elevators, escalators, and various
22 stairways at both facilities.

23 The proposed location at City
24 Center, I believe, is second floor. So we

1 would be dealing with some elevators and
2 some escalators there and walkways perhaps
3 from the parking garage.

4 At Vets I haven't walked this
5 through. You guys have.

6 Describe that for me.

7 MR. DAMSCHRODER: It would be
8 the Brehm Auditorium, which is on the east
9 side of Vet's Memorial, overlooking the
10 river.

11 It's the space we discussed that
12 has a little auditorium and stage. I
13 think the Republicans have used it for
14 their Central Committee meeting in the
15 past. I think the Democrats have used the
16 space over there for the summer party.

17 Voters would park in the lot and
18 would access the building using the front
19 round rotunda from the addition put on, I
20 think, in the 80s. There are two
21 elevators there that are wide for
22 wheelchair access and also a set of stairs
23 that goes around up to the auditorium
24 level. And voters would have to then walk

1 the length of the auditorium down the main
2 promenade across the front of the building
3 to access the Brehm Auditorium.

4 I have already talked to the
5 folks at Vets, and they are going to have
6 signage as well. As part of our budget
7 request to Commissioners there is some
8 money for signage as well.

9 MR. WHITE: Both facilities are
10 fully able to handle the public. The
11 advantage of Vets is the T1 lines there.
12 We don't need special lines.

13 It will cost to go to Vets. But
14 I go back to here we are moving a point
15 location, a very important point location,
16 a mile from where it has been for quite a
17 long time established. But like I say,
18 both facilities will work.

19 The commissioners and their
20 people want us at Vets. So my
21 recommendation for this Board is to follow
22 the commissioners' lead on this thing. I
23 think we just need do.

24 There will be other challenging

1 things between now and election day bigger
2 than this to deal with commissioners on.
3 I think you need to pick and choose your
4 battles.

5 This is a battle where they are
6 not concerned about the distance. Both
7 facilities will work.

8 Change makes pain, no matter
9 where we go. People don't like change.
10 And commissioners are not concerned. They
11 are the ones that will have the biggest
12 impact on on Election Day, because all
13 three of them will be on the ballot.

14 CHAIRMAN PREISSE: Mike, do you
15 have any thoughts?

16 COMMISSIONER COLLEY: No.

17 CHAIRMAN PREISSE: The sooner we
18 make a decision, the sooner we can
19 communicate this to the voters.

20 Mr. Anthony?

21 MR. ANTHONY: Just some
22 observations. One is the Director from
23 the Secretary of State's Office suggesting
24 we use public facilities whenever

1 possible, public schools or public
2 facilities.

3 We would be in compliance with
4 the Secretary of State's directive by
5 looking at a public facility as opposed to
6 going to a private facility. I think
7 that's a consideration we should be
8 thinking about.

9 Plus I can remember in the
10 spring during the primary that we had a
11 lot of individuals that needed assistance
12 because they were handicapped for various
13 reasons, and it became kind of confusing
14 trying to have somebody go out and cast
15 their ballot and then bring them back in.

16 I think at Vets it would be a
17 little easier to do that. Curbside
18 voting, I am sure there have been
19 arrangements for curbside voting.

20 At City Center that may be a
21 little more difficult because it is away
22 from the street, whereas at Vets they have
23 a parking lot we could probably designate
24 as a curbside voting area. I think that

1 has some benefit.

2 Plus I have had conversations
3 with the commissioners, and there is an
4 indication they would prefer us to use a
5 public facility not only because of cost
6 savings but because of a public facility.

7 My issues are, again, it's just
8 the events going on at the Vets during the
9 overlay part of the time that we will be
10 there. Just how we deal with that will be
11 something we will really have to take into
12 consideration.

13 MR. WHITE: The accounting
14 people that run the Vets have been really
15 great at rearranging schedules. The
16 people who operate the Veterans building
17 over there are going out of their way to
18 make sure this facility works for us. I
19 don't think there will be any conflicts.

20 MR. ANTHONY: I could just see a
21 big conference --

22 MR. WHITE: They are really
23 bending over backwards. Once it's there
24 I think they will try to do everything

1 possible to make sure we are accommodated.

2 CHAIRMAN PREISSE: Don't we
3 understand as well that one of the
4 conferences of potential concern has been
5 canceled?

6 MR. DAMSCHRODER: Yes. The
7 Universal Light Conference that had the
8 space for the second weekend of early
9 voting, they had the Brehm Auditorium
10 booked. That was the weekend we were
11 going to tear everything down.

12 What they have actually done is
13 the conference has at the request of Vets
14 actually canceled the portion of their
15 conference that was going to be held in
16 that room, because they felt when they
17 were approached by Vets that this issue
18 was important enough that they wanted to
19 accommodate the voters of Franklin
20 County.

21 The other organizations later on
22 the fourth weekend, that is a USA Today
23 cheerleading competition in the main
24 auditorium and then the DeVry graduation

1 in the main auditorium on Sunday. They
2 have both given up their previous
3 contracts on our room so we don't have to
4 worry about tearing down.

5 I think it's also important to
6 remember that Vets, even though we talk
7 about it as one building, it's really
8 actually two separate buildings. There is
9 the main auditorium, the theater, with the
10 adjacent Brehm Auditorium that we're going
11 to be using and two adjacent convention
12 halls. They are connected physically but
13 they are separate entrances.

14 So if we are successful with
15 signage to indicate that voters enter on
16 the front rotunda instead of going back to
17 the convention hall area, then I don't
18 think we'll have much trouble except for
19 maybe on that last weekend with DeVry's
20 graduation, if we decide to do a Sunday
21 voting that day, of folks voting and the
22 general public being in that front main
23 theater and auditorium space.

24 MR. ANTHONY: Mr. Chair, the

1 other concern I have is that -- and I
2 don't know if you can do this.

3 We had it set up in here and it
4 worked fine up until we got the surge of
5 folks. And then because we couldn't
6 process them fast enough because we didn't
7 have enough ability to process fast
8 enough -- we had enough machines. We just
9 couldn't process them fast enough.

10 We have the ability to expand
11 that capability over at the Vets so we
12 know on that last couple of days we will
13 have thousands of people come in and we
14 can process them quickly or more quickly
15 than we did here last time.

16 MR. WHITE: We have that
17 availability too. That's why I think we
18 need to pick and choose what different
19 arguments we will have with commissioners.

20 There are so many challenges
21 from this day to Election Day with this
22 historic presidential election coming up.
23 We have studies on; do we have enough
24 voting machines. There is a possibility

1 we might have to go and ask the
2 commissioners for additional voting
3 machines. So there are huge challenges
4 this Board has to deal with financially to
5 be able to run a successful election
6 between now and Election Day.

7 This just isn't, I think, a bout
8 you want to have with your commissioners.
9 I want to strongly recommend again that I
10 think you guys should move to go to Vets.
11 This is where the Commissioners want it.
12 You have such huge challenges that this
13 Board is facing here, that you will have
14 to have a working relationship with
15 commissioners on.

16 MR. DAMSCHRODER: In addition to
17 what Denny said on that issue I think the
18 advantage to both City Center and Vets as
19 compared to this room is both spaces are
20 significantly larger than this. So we
21 have the ability to expand operations in
22 terms of adding computer terminals.

23 And the issue there becomes
24 having the funding to hire part-timers

