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APPEARANCES:

Franklin County Prosecutor's Office
By Mr. Harold J. Anderson, III
373 South High Street, 13th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

On behalf of the Board.

ALSO PRESENT:

Ms. Suzanne Brown,
Executive Assistant to the Board

Ms. Karen Cotton,
Operations Manager,
Franklin County Board of Elections

Mr. Ben Piscitelli,
Public Information Officer,
Franklin County Board of Elections

Mr. Daniel Fuhrman,
Warehouse/Logistics Department,
Franklin County Board of Elections

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P R O C E E D I N G S

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DIRECTOR ANTHONY: I'd like to call the Franklin County Board of Elections meeting to order and I'll do the roll call.

Kimberly Marinello?

BOARD MEMBER MARINELLO: Here.

DIRECTOR ANTHONY: Zachary Manifold?

BOARD MEMBER MANIFOLD: Here.

DIRECTOR ANTHONY: Douglas Preisse?

CHAIRMAN PREISSE: Here.

DIRECTOR ANTHONY: We're all here and accounted for, sir.

The first item on the agenda, as you all know, we have to do a yearly submission of our Election Administration Plan over to the Secretary of State, and you have before you our plan. I know that Dana e-mailed it out to everybody last week so you could take a look at it. Dana did a wonderful job on this. I think it's well done.

Any questions?

(No response.)

DIRECTOR ANTHONY: If there are none --

1 CHAIRMAN PREISSE: Do you want to speak
2 to it?

3 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WALCH: Sure. I think
4 it -- what the Secretary of State prescribed was a --
5 were a series of questions that he wanted to see
6 included in every plan as he continues to work toward
7 consistency across the board as it relates to the 88
8 county Boards of Elections.

9 We followed that plan, the template for
10 that according to the Secretary, added in some
11 additional information from our master plan that we
12 have here for the agency that we built last year and
13 the first of this year. So we were able to take many
14 of the items out of that master plan that we have,
15 but also include some additional information in there
16 that were specific to the planning recommendations of
17 the Secretary of State.

18 I think it's a very good plan. I think
19 the staff did a great job in helping Bill and I put
20 everything together in here as it related to the
21 individual departments that each manager is
22 accountable for. I think we have more than answered
23 the questions and the recommendations of the
24 Secretary of State in this plan, and I think it sets

1 us up very, very well moving into the final months
2 here of 2012.

3 BOARD MEMBER MARINELLO: I think it looks
4 great. Thank you very much.

5 DIRECTOR ANTHONY: Is there a motion?

6 CHAIRMAN PREISSE: Any questions?

7 BOARD MEMBER MARINELLO: No questions.

8 BOARD MEMBER MANIFOLD: Mr. Chairman, I
9 move that the Board adopt the Election Administration
10 Plan developed by the Board of Elections staff for
11 the 2012 General Election and that this plan be
12 submitted to the Ohio Secretary of State's office as
13 required by Directive 2012-14.

14 DIRECTOR ANTHONY: Is there a second?

15 BOARD MEMBER MARINELLO: Second.

16 DIRECTOR ANTHONY: All those in favor?

17 BOARD MEMBERS: Aye.

18 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WALCH: We do have, if
19 you all could sign one copy of it under your name
20 there so that -- we have to send this in to the
21 Secretary of State's office this afternoon. We will
22 scan that cover page in and send everything as a PDF
23 file which is the required way to send that in. We
24 will send that in and meet the deadline as prescribed

1 by the Secretary of State in that directive.

2 DIRECTOR ANTHONY: The next item on the
3 agenda is a new warehouse employee and I'll let Dana
4 take that.

5 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WALCH: As you know, we
6 had a retirement at the end of June with Tim Beck who
7 he had been here for quite a long time. We were sad
8 to see Tim leave us for retirement, but we were
9 understanding of that. But as sad as we were to see
10 Tim depart, we are excited about Dan Fuhrman who is
11 with us this afternoon.

12 Dan, if you'd wave to everybody there.

13 And Dan has spent a considerable amount
14 of his career in the trucking industry, has done a
15 great number of things with logistics, and I think he
16 will fit in very, very well with what we need done
17 with the function of the warehouse staff and the
18 logistics function that they have out there. I think
19 Dan will fit in very, very well.

20 Dan, do you have anything you'd like to
21 say about yourself?

22 You all do have a copy of his résumé in
23 your packets today, but, Dan, do you have anything?

24 MR. FURHMAN: Just looking forward to the

1 opportunity. I met several of the people here and
2 some of the warehouse people. I'm looking forward to
3 working with all of you and some of the challenges
4 and it will be a fun time. Thank you.

5 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WALCH: Do any of you
6 have any questions for Dan?

7 CHAIRMAN PREISSE: Nope.

8 BOARD MEMBER MARINELLO: Uh-uh.

9 DIRECTOR ANTHONY: Is there a motion?

10 CHAIRMAN PREISSE: Then I move that the
11 Board hire Daniel Fuhrman as an employee of the Board
12 of Elections in the Logistics Department beginning
13 July 10, 2012, at a compensation rate of 20,000 --

14 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WALCH: No.

15 CHAIRMAN PREISSE: No. A compensation
16 rate of \$20.1923 per hour.

17 BOARD MEMBER MANIFOLD: Second.

18 DIRECTOR ANTHONY: All those in favor?

19 BOARD MEMBERS: Aye.

20 DIRECTOR ANTHONY: Motion carries.

21 The last item on the agenda are the
22 charter amendment petitions. We have Carolyn --
23 Karen Cotton in to kind of go through all the hard
24 work that they've put in to counting these charter

1 amendment petitions.

2 MS. COTTON: A week ago this past
3 Thursday, we received, from the City of Columbus,
4 1,214 part-petitions filed with the City of Columbus
5 by a group wanting to change the charter of the City
6 of Columbus to allow for ward representation.

7 As we were going through the petitions,
8 we had several questions and we actually ended up
9 checking this petition as a Batch 1, Batch 2, because
10 there were so many of the petitions that fell into
11 the category that we had uncertainties about.

12 One of my staff brought a stack of
13 petitions he had been working with for the whole
14 morning and had over 200 signatures on the
15 part-petitions. He had absolutely no signatures on
16 that part-petition -- those part-petitions that were
17 valid.

18 I mean, no matter how hard you try,
19 standing at the entrance of that bowling alley or the
20 grocery store or whatever, you don't usually get 200
21 signatures, circulated by the same individual, all of
22 them invalid. So we started looking at the petitions
23 more closely.

24 I gave you each a packet there and if

1 you'll just go page by page with me, I can explain
2 where we felt that there was suspicion here and maybe
3 warrants additional investigation.

4 The first page here is Petition No. 7.
5 The second page is your signature page that's on that
6 Petition No. 7. If you look at the J's on lines
7 No. 1, 3, and 5, you see the similarities in those
8 J's. And then you see other similarities throughout
9 that page where it looks as though someone just
10 passed the petition around the table and every third
11 or fourth person signed someone else's name.

12 If you look at the next page of the
13 part-petition, if you look at the signature on line
14 14 and line 21, you again see those real distinct
15 similarities. And then 20 and 23 look to be in the
16 same handwriting.

17 So turn on to Petition 297, and the next
18 page being the signature page begins with Larry and
19 then Lisa and then Randall. Look at the similarities
20 in those three signatures. And they do not match --
21 if we were -- in most of these cases we can't even
22 find the individual listed at that address and, in
23 some cases, there isn't even a valid address listed
24 there. And then the next page, we have Jamie Hill

1 and Jackson Hill, and those J's, again, look like the
2 J's that were on the No. 0007 petition.

3 Shana Carson was the circulator of this
4 part-petition and she was working for the Columbus
5 Coalist which is really the Columbus Coalition for
6 Responsive Government.

7 But then, again, on the next
8 part-petition, lines 15 and 16, we have Erich and
9 Mark Rodriguez, and look at the similarities there.
10 You can see similarities throughout the remainder of
11 that petition also.

12 Petition No. 444, we have Shana Carson
13 and Shane Carson. One would think that Shana and
14 Shane probably lived at the same address, but if you
15 look at the address portion of the petition, we have
16 Shane living at 5576 Forest Hills, and then Shane
17 living at 2135 Elm State or I have no idea what that
18 is really, and then the next line it's 2135. So they
19 kind of got off on their signatures. They evidently
20 were working with a walking list. The next page has
21 several similarities also.

22 And this is just a sampling. We ended up
23 with 26 part-petitions which we ruled to be totally
24 invalid having 650 signatures on it because of the

1 non-genuine signatures on the part-petitions.

2 The next-to-last petition, on lines 17
3 and 18, we have Laverne Gwinn and Antwan Green. Look
4 at the G's there. They just kind of jump out at you.

5 And then the last part-petition, we have
6 Jackie DeVault and George DeVault, Bradley Sessions,
7 and Teresa Wertz, and all of those appear to be the
8 exact same handwriting on all of those individuals.
9 As well as the next page, Tamara Grubb, Tiffany King,
10 Laura Mitchell, Renee Metcalf, they all appear to be
11 the same handwriting.

12 So it's kind of hard for us to do an
13 investigation and contact the petitioners whose
14 signature they are purported to be because they're
15 not registered, they're not there, they're not
16 anywhere in our files. I don't know what the next
17 course of action is, but we would like for the Board
18 to give us permission to do some additional
19 investigation there.

20 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WALCH: We basically
21 wanted to bring this to your attention today, to let
22 you know that we will be doing what we can on these
23 petitions to look into them more because there are,
24 as you can see, a number of irregularities here.

1 So at this point we didn't really know
2 that there's anything necessarily for you to vote on
3 or anything like that. We wanted to bring to your
4 attention, though, that there were some very peculiar
5 situations with these petitions and we will be asking
6 every question we possibly can.

7 As Karen brought up, in some instances it
8 might be difficult for us to do this because in some
9 instances clearly these names and addresses have just
10 been randomly brought up, so it may be difficult for
11 us to find these folks because they may not actually
12 exist, but we wanted to let the Board know that we
13 will be --

14 CHAIRMAN PREISSE: In the case --

15 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WALCH: -- looking into
16 it more.

17 CHAIRMAN PREISSE: -- of "DUP," that's
18 duplicate.

19 MS. COTTON: Uh-huh.

20 CHAIRMAN PREISSE: Duplicate signer.

21 MS. COTTON: Duplicate signer. Someone
22 with that name had already signed the petition.

23 CHAIRMAN PREISSE: So, for instance, in
24 this where we have No. 13, you would be -- you would

1 likely be able to contact this Ashlea Hutchinson.

2 MS. COTTON: But that wasn't one of the
3 signatures that really jumped out as being, I mean,
4 it was --

5 CHAIRMAN PREISSE: But in terms of it
6 being a duplicate --

7 MS. COTTON: Not genuine.

8 CHAIRMAN PREISSE: Well, we know it's a
9 real person you can talk to, I guess, is --

10 MS. COTTON: Right.

11 CHAIRMAN PREISSE: -- what we're saying
12 because it's been verified on some other petition.

13 Remind me what the acronyms and
14 abbreviations are. "DUP" is duplicate. "NRA" is not
15 registered at this address?

16 MS. COTTON: Uh-huh. "NR" is not
17 registered. "ILL" is illegible. Pencil is --
18 printed signature is "PS." Pencil is "P."

19 CHAIRMAN PREISSE: What's "OD"?

20 MS. COTTON: Out of district. If they
21 were living outside the City of Columbus at some
22 other address in Franklin County. "OC" and "OD" are
23 actually grouped together, out of county and out of
24 district.

1 CHAIRMAN PREISSE: Well, it does look
2 like there's some little bit of monkey business going
3 on with a few of these.

4 MS. COTTON: We took the scans of these
5 26 part-petitions prior to returning the petitions to
6 the City of Columbus. They came and got them about
7 11:30 today. We were able to check 26,870 signatures
8 of which 8,471 were found to be valid.

9 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WALCH: Which is only
10 about 31 percent; is that correct? It was about 31.

11 MS. COTTON: 31 1/2 percent.

12 Of the petitions that were circulated by
13 volunteers and people who actually signed the
14 employer as well as the address, the percentage was
15 running 42 percent.

16 Of those petitions where they signed that
17 they were working for a group, but didn't list the
18 address of the group, the validity rate dropped to
19 22.3 percent.

20 So, overall, their validity was 31.5.
21 Given what they said they filed, they needed a
22 65 percent validity ratio in order to get enough
23 valid signatures to get the issue on the ballot.

24 DIRECTOR ANTHONY: You know, one of the

1 points that we really want to kind of stress out to
2 the public and folks passing out these petitions is
3 to be really careful, you know, because we do check
4 them and we want to make sure that if you're paying
5 people or if folks are out doing signatures that they
6 take the time to do it right. A 31 percent validity
7 rate is pretty dismal. Plus with all of these it
8 just looks like there is something amiss.

9 So we'll probably do a press release
10 today reminding folks if they're passing out -- if
11 they're doing any petition initiatives or drives, to
12 really take a look at training their people better to
13 get these things filled out and try to highlight some
14 of the areas, like, they should be registered voters,
15 they should sign their names instead of print their
16 names.

17 So we're just trying to put some
18 information out there so that folks, if they're doing
19 a petition effort, that they take a little more time
20 making sure that they're correct, because we spend a
21 lot of time checking these, and for them to come up
22 as bad as these did, I mean, it's not good for
23 anybody. So we're just trying to get that out there.

24 And if there is fraud, I mean, that's,

1 you know, we've seen it last year in the race for one
2 of the school boards where we had an individual do a
3 similar thing, and we did turn it over to the
4 Prosecutor's Office, and the person did -- I guess he
5 did a plea bargain with the Prosecutor's Office.

6 So we take it very serious and we want
7 the general public to know that we take it serious,
8 and that if they're going to send petitions to us,
9 they can't sit in a dining room and go through the
10 phone book and fill out names and try to change the
11 way they write the names on the lines.

12 BOARD MEMBER MANIFOLD: I guess I would,
13 the only question I have for Harold is what all --
14 and I know you guys are talking, what all do we need
15 to have before we send it, refer it to the
16 Prosecutor? We have done it in the past with other
17 ones. What all do we need our staff to do? What all
18 do we need before we send it?

19 MR. ANDERSON: There actually is a, as I
20 understand it because I'm, obviously, somewhat new to
21 this stuff as well, a protocol that was worked out
22 between the Prosecutor's Office and the Secretary of
23 State's office. And we'll dig that back up and talk
24 to Bill and Dana about what exactly the next steps

1 for staff need to be, and then the appropriate
2 referral, whether it be, you know, law enforcement or
3 directly to our office or the Secretary of State.

4 BOARD MEMBER MANIFOLD: Okay. Thanks.

5 CHAIRMAN PREISSE: Thank you.

6 I don't -- you're giving us an update,
7 but you don't need further authorization to proceed.

8 DEPUTY DIRECTOR WALCH: No.

9 CHAIRMAN PREISSE: I sense the mood of
10 the Board is keep doing your job, your eagle eyes
11 have found some apparent irregularities, and so let's
12 look into it a little further as we're endeavoring to
13 protect the process and protect the public.

14 MS. COTTON: We'll try to investigate
15 further and get some affidavits together and put
16 together a recommendation for the Board to then
17 submit it on to the prosecuting attorney's office.

18 CHAIRMAN PREISSE: Thank you, Karen.

19 BOARD MEMBER MARINELLO: Thanks, Karen.

20 DIRECTOR ANTHONY: That's all we have for
21 you this afternoon. Is there a motion to adjourn?

22 BOARD MEMBER MARINELLO: Mr. Chairman, I
23 move to adjourn.

24 BOARD MEMBER MANIFOLD: Second.

