

*Commissioners*

**MARISEL A. HERNANDEZ**, *Chair*  
**WILLIAM J. KRESSE**, *Commissioner/Secretary*  
**JUNE A. BROWN**, *Commissioner*

**CHARLES HOLIDAY, JR.**, *Executive Director*



**Board of Election Commissioners for the City of Chicago**  
**Regular Board Meeting**

**February 8, 2022, 10:00 a.m.**

**69 West Washington Street, 8th Floor Conference Room, Chicago, Illinois 60602**  
**via WebEx video conference**

**Board Members:**

Marisel A. Hernandez, Chair  
William J. Kresse, Commissioner/Secretary  
June A. Brown, Commissioner

**Staff:**

Charles Holiday, Executive Director  
Sandra Aspera, Assistant Executive Director  
Adam Lasker, General Counsel  
Max Bever, Director of Public Information  
Aneta Turek, Manager – Human Resources  
Opal Walls, Procurement Officer  
Alan Chase, IT Department  
Lance Gough, Consultant  
Trish Sheehy

**Guests:**

Helene Gabelnick, League of Women Voters of Chicago (LWV Chicago)  
C. Betty Magness, Rainbow P.U.S.H.  
Danielle Matzdorf, Arrow Messenger  
Brian Whiteley, ES&S  
Rose E. Joshua

- I. Call to Order: The Chair called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.
- II. Roll Call: All members of the Board were present via WebEx video conference.
- III. Consideration of Agenda: The agenda was accepted as presented.
- IV. Approval of Minutes:
  - A. Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of January 25, 2022: Commissioner Brown moved to approve the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of January 25, 2022. Commissioner Kresse seconded the motion. The motion passed and the Minutes were approved by unanimous vote of the Board.
- V. Executive Director's Report  
Executive Director Charles Holiday reported:  
  
On January 26<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Holiday attended an online discussion with other election officials hosted by the Attorney General's office and the U.S. Department of Justice (DoJ) on the work of the Election Threats Task Force. Updates were given on charges of interstate threats to kill government officials. Information was given, including a review of the over 850 reports of threats to election officials. The

Attorney General reiterated that the department has no tolerance for such threats, and will not hesitate to investigate and prosecute. During the meeting information about the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant was given, noting that the funds can be used to deter, detect and protect against threats of violence to election officials.

Mr. Holiday met with the Polling Place Department, Equip for Equality and the DoJ on the data transfer of our polling place surveys of public and private locations.

Mr. Holiday, along with Assistant Executive Director Sandra Aspera, Clinton Hurde (Manager of Pre-Election Voting and Logistics) and Christopher Tomecek (Assistant Manager of Pre-Election Voting and Logistics) met with 69 West Washington Street building management to look at and secure needed space for our Vote-by-Mail operations to put our Vote-by-Mail operations in a central area.

Mr. Holiday had a meeting with the Assistant Executive Director, the Director of Public Information, Vote-by-Mail staff, Registration staff, and General and Legal Counsel, on policies and procedures to facilitate permanent Vote-by-Mail. More details are forthcoming.

Mr. Holiday met virtually with members of the Association of Election Commission Officials of Illinois (AECOI) and its lobbyists on current election bills. Mr. Holiday believes that General Counsel Adam Lasker will cover that in his report.

The Chair asked Mr. Holiday if the Board would be able to access any of the Byrne Grant for security. Mr. Holiday stated that he's looking into that to see what portion the State has been given and what portion the Chicago Board can receive. The Chair said that that was great because she thinks it will help us with Election Day coverage of security at the polling places. Mr. Holiday stated that Commissioner Kresse had a great idea which Mr. Holiday is looking into as well. Commissioner Kresse expounded by stating that the idea was that since our office building, 69 West Washington, includes offices for both the Illinois State Board of Elections (ISBE) and the Cook County Election Board, that perhaps the three agencies could jointly apply for a Byrne Grant to harden security at our building.

A. Assistant Executive Director's Report

Assistant Executive Director Sandra Aspera reported:

Ms. Aspera welcomed Commissioner June Brown. (Ms. Aspera had been absent from Commissioner Brown's first meeting.)

Ms. Aspera reported that the Community Services Department is sending a newsletter to the current list of Judges of Election. It is being sent via two methods: email and regular mail (U.S. Postal Service). The purpose of the communication is to encourage judges to confirm their participation for the upcoming 2022 Primary Election by March 7<sup>th</sup>.

Maritza Buendia is our new Spanish language contractor. Ms. Aspera, Mr. Holiday and the Community Services Manager and Community Services Assistant Manager held an onboarding, introduction meeting with her last week.

Relative to Human Resources (HR) matters, Ms. Aspera continues to work closely with our recently hired HR Manager, Aneta Turek, who is on this virtual conference.

Regarding the Registration Department, Ms. Aspera emphasized that our staff is assisting the General Public with the laptop computers in our offices for voter registration and signature verification, and is making sure that the public is following COVID protocols. Hours are currently Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.

Managers from two different departments are providing some staff, on a temporary basis, to assist the Registration Department with projects such as: electronic attachment of support

documentation to voter files, including voter registration transfers to other jurisdictions, and death notices.

As Mr. Holiday had mentioned, we did have a meeting with the Pre-Election Voting and Logistics Department securing space in the Lower Level (pedway) for the Vote-by-Mail processing and the Central Count of the Vote-by-Mail ballots.

Ms. Aspera has had several meetings on the canvass mailing, and should have that project finalized soon. We anticipate the mailing to go out at the beginning of March.

Ms. Aspera provided an update on the warehouse:

- The certification of the equipment upgrade – certified by the ISBE in November 2021: the upgrade and maintenance of the touch screens and ballot printers are 55% complete.
- The replacement of toner for all Early Voting (EV) printers has been completed
- The warehouse continues to empty out the blue carriers so they will be ready to be filled with supplies and equipment for the 2022 Primary.
- The warehouse is also conducting an inventory of supplies and equipment on-hand and accessing the condition to determine what needs to be replaced.

Ms. Aspera will be participating in the the National Association of Election Officials’ Election Center special workshop and course training later this month in Atlanta, Georgia.

B. Public Information Director’s Report

Mr. Max Bever, Director of Public Information reported:

Mr. Bever will soon be taping our next “City that Votes” podcast with Commissioner Brown. We’ll introduce voters and our listeners to our new Commissioner.

Along with our designers, we continue to work on the canvass mailing. We’re also looking at new “I voted” sticker options, instead of wristbands.

VI. Old Business

A. Infrastructure Projects and Changes in Election Administration: Already discussed.

B. Electronic Poll Books: Ms. Aspera stated that there was a meeting with Brian Whiteley of ES&S (who is on this call). The updating of the e-pollbook will start at the end of March. The Chair asked how long this process will take. Mr. Whiteley said it will take about 3-4 days.

C. Voting Equipment: Already addressed.

D. Legislation:

General Counsel Adam Lasker reported that at the last meeting he gave a summary on pending bills. Since then there’s been very little action on those bills. The legislature canceled its sessions last week due to the weather, so not much has happened.

Mr. Lasker did speak with the Legislative Director from the ISBE late last week. She told Mr. Lasker that the plan is to keep our eyes open for an election omnibus bill to be introduced towards the end of this current session.

VII. New Business

A. Approval of an Intergovernmental Agreement with the County of Cook to lease Office Space (Suites 600 and 800, 69 West Washington, Chicago, Illinois).

Mr. Holiday stated that this item is just to lease the office space we are currently occupying. Mr. Holiday mentioned to building management that if the remaining parts of the eighth floor are vacant and available, to give us the first shot at that space so we could spread out our operations and wouldn’t have to constantly move Vote-by-Mail operations. But,

according to Mr. Holiday, this lease is solid: It has been reviewed by both our General Counsel and our Facility Consultant, Dean Ftikas.

The Chair asked Mr. Holiday if we are still looking for space for the Vote-by-Mail operations. Mr. Holiday replied, that no, we have secured space on the lower level (pedway level) of this building. So, the space is all on the lower level where the Agilis and the large conference room are located, so everything will be in one place; thus, negating any issues with chain-of-custody. The space has been secured and we're moving forward with whatever construction that will be needed.

Mr. Lasker clarified that today's agreement is only for suites 800 and 600. The space that Mr. Holiday just mentioned will be covered in future separate agreements.

Commissioner Kresse asked if we have a requested "dibs" on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor if that becomes available. Mr. Holiday said we could look into that as well, but added that he has asked building management for "first dibs" on any space that becomes available. The 7<sup>th</sup> floor would be great.

Commissioner Brown asked Mr. Holiday as to additional space on the 8<sup>th</sup> floor: are there tentative openings now, or is he just looking toward the future. Mr. Holiday said he is looking toward the future. If the current tenants vacate, building management will give us first dibs on that space.

Commissioner Brown said that she agrees with Commissioner Kresse that the 7<sup>th</sup> floor an optimal space, when thinking of security issues. Mr. Lasker stated that the Public Guardian's Office is currently on the 7<sup>th</sup> floor, and they have no plans on moving.

Commissioner Kresse moved to approve a 5-year intergovernmental agreement with the County of Cook for the Board's offices on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> floors at 69 West Washington with a total base rent of \$3,636,000 subject to adjustments over the 5-year term, commencing on December 1, 2021 through November 30, 2026. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed by 3:0 vote of the Board.

B. Approval of sole-source agreement with Hensley Company for Vote-by-Mail services:

Purchasing Agent Opal Walls recommends that the Board enter into this sole-source agreement with Hensley Company.

Hensley Company performed our VBM services in 2020 elections. They did an admirable job for us. Along with Board staff, Hensley created a new system for VBM. That new system allowed for automatic print-on-demand services. It also had key innovations that included a redesign of the envelopes to letter-size that ultimately resulted in significantly reducing costs for the Board. They implemented a 2D bar code on all pieces of the mailing which allowed for an automated matching process for us. They utilized Qualified USPS (United States Postal Services) Business Reply mail, which again allowed for postage savings. The "I-voted" sticker was redesigned so that it was automatically inserted into the packet.

This contract will be for the upcoming elections which has the same type of Vote-by-Mail services for Hensley. The term of the contract would be from February 9, 2022 through April 8, 2023. This would include elections in June 2022, November 2022, February 2023 and, if needed, April 2023. This contract's dollar amount is for those elections. Ms. Walls split them into Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023. For Fiscal Year 2022 the amount would be \$1.3 million, and for Fiscal Year 2023 approximately \$1.2 million, for a total not to exceed \$2,554,500. Ms. Walls wants the Board to know that these are just estimates. It is hard to zero in on exactly how many VBM packets will be needed, so we veered toward the high-end. But we will only be billed and charged for the actual number of packets that are printed and delivered.

Ms. Walls noted that Hensley Company is a certified Woman Owned Company through the City of Chicago. Also this is a sole-source contract, as Hensley is the only Illinois mailing house certified through Dominion that can do this work.

Ms. Walls asked the Board for its approval in terms of this contract with Hensley Company in the amount of \$2,554,500 over the term of the agreement.

Commissioner Kresse wished to clarify that in the event we don't need a second-round election in April 2023, we pay nothing or we only pay for the wards that are involved. Ms. Walls stated if there isn't a 2023 election we wouldn't pay for the services. Again, we only pay for what packages are produced, mailed and developed for us.

Commissioner Brown moved to approve a sole source contract with Hensley Company for Vote-by-Mail ballot printing and mailing services for the next four elections with a total cost not to exceed \$2,554,500 over the term of the agreement running from February 9, 2022 through April 8, 2023. Commissioner Kresse seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote of the Board.

C. Approval of a memorandum of understanding for a service agreement with the Mikva Challenge for student poll worker recruitment services:

Mr. Holiday explained that the Mikva Challenge (Mikva) helps recruit student Judges of Election. Mikva reached out to us and we have discussed services for the upcoming election cycle. They would like to partner with us and provide us with student judges.

Commissioner Kresse asked if we have any information as to how many of the High School Judges stay on as regular judges. Mr. Lasker said that he does not have any statistics, but that he had asked and was told that yes, some High School Judges come back as regular Judges and that they are savvy with technology and enjoy the experience.

The Chair asked how many High School Judges do we normally get or expect to get through this program. Mr. Lance Gough said that last year we had up to 2,300 student judges through Mikva.

Commissioner Kresse moved to approve a Memorandum of Understanding for a services agreement with Mikva Challenge for assisting the Board with the recruitment of High School students to serve as Election Judges for the 2022 Primary and General Elections with the cost of \$20,000 per election for a total of \$40,000 over the term of the agreement.

Commissioner Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote of the Board.

VIII. Legal Report

Late last week the Libertarian Party filed a lawsuit against the Cook County Clerk's office and also named this Board and its Commissioners as defendants. The issue is that in the 2020 November election the Libertarian Party candidate for Cook County State's Attorney received more than 5% of the vote. Under the Election Code that makes them an Established Party. However, the Cook County Clerk's office allegedly has not recognized the Libertarian Party as eligible for having a Primary Election for the County Offices that fall underneath, that is, County Board President, County Board Commissioners, and so forth. So, this is really a dispute between the Libertarian Party and the County Clerk's Office. As this Board knows, during this election cycle it our administrative statutory duty to comply with the ballot certifications that we receive from both the County Clerk's office and the Illinois State Board of Elections. The ISBE handles the State and Federal offices and the County Clerk's office handles the County offices, and we print the ballots accordingly.

Mr. Lasker has communicated with counsel for the Libertarian Party, and he has indicated that he will voluntarily be dismissing our Board and Commissioners from the lawsuit.

Mr. Lasker will continue to monitor the case as it will affect our ballots, and will keep the Board apprised.

IX. Financial Report: none

X. Public Comment: none

XI. Executive Session: Commissioner Hernandez moved to go into Executive Session in accordance with Section 2C-1 of the Open Meetings Act. Commissioner Kresse seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote of the Board. The Chair stated that no action will be taken by the Board during Executive Session and that when they return from Executive Session to open session there will be no motions other than the motion to adjourn. The Board entered Executive session at 10:29 a.m.

The Board returned to open session at 11:40 a.m. The Chair announced that no action was taken during Executive Session.

XII. Adjournment: Commissioner Brown moved to adjourn until the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. Commissioner Kresse seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote of the Board. The meeting was adjourned at 11:41 a.m.

**NOTICE: The Chair of the Board of Election Commissioners for the City of Chicago has determined that an in-person meeting of the Board is not practical or prudent at this time due to the ongoing coronavirus/COVID-19 health pandemic. Thus, this meeting of the Board will be held by video conference, without the physical presence of a quorum of the Board, pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/7(e).**

Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William J. Kresse". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Commissioner William J. Kresse  
Secretary