

Hartford County ROVAC Meeting

Newington CT

3/14/2023 10:00 AM

76 in attendance (18 In Person and 58 via Zoom)

Chair Darlene Burrell, Suffield, opened the meeting at 10:11am. She thanked the Newington ROVs, Theresa Avey and Jenni Sehmi for hosting the meeting.

There are quite a few new Registrars and Deputies in attendance: Jenny Sehmi, Newington Registrar Veronica Rosario, East Hartford Registrar, Vanessa Jenkins, East Hartford Deputy, Michael Abbate, East Hartford Deputy. New Farmington Registrars are Beth Kintner and Ann Newbury. Jennifer Marshall-Nealy is the new Registrar in Bloomfield and Sharon O'Connor returns as Deputy. Hartford has new Deputy Nyruca Vega Velazquez and Bristol has new Deputy, Jolene Lusitani. Darlene Burrell reminded the new Registrars to sign up for the newbie class at conference. All Registrars should be familiar with Title 9 and the Registrars handbook is available to read over.

Ted Bromley has left Secretary of the State's office. If you have any questions, contact Moriah Moriarty or Heather Augeri. Please share any communications so we can all be informed on issues and concerns.

Minutes were accepted as amended for Lew Fiore's misspelling.

Treasurer, Sue Burnham, South Windsor, reported that South Windsor was doing the raffle basket for the Spring Conference. If you haven't already paid, it is \$10 per town. The Raffle is 3 days long with Lou DeCillio, Stratford, doing a 50/50 everyday with the drawing at lunch. For the new members, the money goes to the Judi Beaudreau scholarship fund. Stephanie McGuire, Granby, thought the Scholarship fund was a great idea. Jennifer Marshall Nealy wanted to know how to apply and who can apply. Chris Prue, ROVAC President, will be putting the form on the ROVAC website.

AUDIT COMMITTEE: Donna Rusgrove, Burlington

The audit is complete. A random selection was done for the checking accounts and the charge cards. The 5 CDs were examined. All receipts should be sent to the treasurer within 1 week to be reimbursed. The contract with Sullivan & LeShane is a two-year contract for \$18,000. Theresa Avey told everyone about her great experience recently with Sullivan & LeShane. There will be changes to the checkbook as the conference will be going through the primary account. The conference is about \$50,000 to \$60,000. M&T Bank is currently our bank but Peter Gostin, New Britain, is looking to change it.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE: Sue Larsen, South Windsor

The committee has been meeting every week for about a month. The classes are almost all finalized. There will be classes on Poll worker recruitment, early voting round table and CVRS. Ryan Bingham will report on Legislation. SEEC will speak and FOI, specific to Registrars issues.

CONVENTION COMMITTEE – Ann Clark, Avon

The committee met two weeks ago and the meals have been chosen. The classes will all be in one room. Registration is alpha by Town. There is still a lot of conversation on a new location. Kevin McCauley, Bristol, said there have been strides in Bristol for the new location. Phil Theroux, Rocky Hill would like to join the committee if there is an opening.

Susan Salina, Simsbury, wanted to know why we were not notified that Ted was leaving. Good question for Secretary Thomas.

HANDBOOK – Darlene Burrell, Suffield

The new handbook was released in January. There are 13 members of the committee and they will be reviewing the handbook again after the legislative session.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE – Theresa Avey, Newington, Mindy Lewis, South Windsor, Sue Larsen, South Windsor, Peter Gostin, New Britain

Tim DeCarlo, Waterbury has been doing most of the public hearings. There are 3 early voting bills (one from SOTS, SENATE and House). March 28th appears to be the last day bills can come out of the committee. Rank Choice voting cannot work with the current tabulators. Laura Wolf, Granby, does not want early voting this year. Registering 16 year olds is another concern. It fizzled out 2 years ago but not sure about this year. Many Registrars wanted to make sure Tim DeCarlo covered our concerns with staffing, equipment and funding. Tom Pugliese, Rocky Hill, said he heard Tim DeCarlo speak and he did a great job. He too has concerns on staffing. Anita Mips, Windsor, feels that 10 days is too long. Donna Rusgrove wants the calendar to be looked at because holidays and Sundays will hard to staff. Jennifer Marshall-Nealy also had concerns over the number of days and do they have to be consecutive. Lisbeth Becker, Glastonbury, also heard Tim DeCarlo and felt he did a great job at representing all of us. Darlene Burrell said we should invite our legislators to work the polls when they are not on the ballot. As far as the budgets for next year, Theresa Avey said we don't have to put it in now. Just ask for it later after the legislation is approved.

Guest: Secretary of the State Thomas arrived at 11:30am. She introduced herself and said she has been in the job 9 weeks and she is getting acclimated. Ted Bromley has left after 20 years in LEAD. SOTS Thomas would not say who was replacing him just yet. She gave us an open invitation to contact her with any issues. She can't fix what she doesn't know about. Her office is hoping to hold meetings once a month to better communication with us.

As far as legislation is concerned, SOTS Thomas has been meeting with GAE and ROVAC. She would like a vote of the Legislators in early April so there would be enough time for a roll out. She is against early voting for referenda but feels 4 days for special elections may work.

SOTS Thomas congratulated Hartford and West Hartford on their special elections.

Funding is critical to the success of early voting. If the funding isn't there for 2023, then she would like the rollout in 2025 since the plan is for the roll out of new tabulators in 2024. Risk limited audit may wait for the new tabulators. Poll worker recruitment will be a priority. The plan is for the initial training to be done by SOTS. Poll Books are another critical issue. UCONN was not happy with the initial vendors. There is a meeting today with UCONN and SOTS Thomas will also look at 3 other states that use poll books.

Phil Theroux had a few comments: let each town decide on the timing of early voting, he would like split shifts if possible. Will the legislators determine the max time and a statewide message? Will early voting change if no excuse absentee balloting is approved.

Susan Salina was disappointed that we were not notified about Ted Bromley's leaving. We need better communication. SOTS Thomas explained what happened and promised to do a better job of communication. Theresa Avey would like to get notification if CVRS goes down. The CVRS contract was brought up. It is in the hands of the Attorney General. It is like turning the Titanic around.

Gigi Feliciano, Hartford, said it will be hard to connect to the Universities if they are forced to have early voting there. Is there a possibility of correcting the language to "may" instead of "shall"? The election calendar needs to be reviewed for early voting. SOTS Thomas said Ted Bromley drafted a preliminary calendar before he left which included a voter registration cut off 4 days prior to the start of early voting. Gigi Feliciano expressed concern over not having enough prep time since early voting is going on so close the election day. Could we close early voting one week prior to the election? SOTS Thomas did not think the legislators would do so. CVRS will have to be updated to include early voting scanning similar to absentee balloting. SOTS Thomas thinks staffing requirements should be left to the towns with a minimum requirement. SOTS will write the guidance for us once legislation is passed. Another concern was the turnover of the ballots to the town clerks. Registrars want to determine the chain of custody of the ballots.

Elizabeth Rousseau, West Hartford, says the connectivity is a major issue. The Board of Education went down and election day and so did we. The manuals we use need to be redone. It has been over 10 years.

Darlene Burrell gave SOTS Thomas a copy of the ROVAC Handbook and she hopes Registrars will be involved in any new rewrites at SOTS.

TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE: Lizbeth Becker, Glastonbury

We have a lot of qualified registrars to assist with CVRS. There is a push back on bonding so the Technology Committee is putting together a demonstration for the legislators. Anna Dickerson, Woodbridge, is compiling a list of tabulator failures. If you have had one, please send her all the technical issues.

Ann Newbury said there was a press release on early voting. Theresa Avey will send it out to everyone.

Sharon Krawieck, Bristol, had concerns over the EMS systems. There are a lot of fixes that need to be done. Whether or not it will be ready for November will be TBD.

Darlene Burrell said cross endorsements have been an issue with EMS. Write ins are another issue. The only way to solve this by making sure a comparison of checked off voters is made with the votes cast. Darlene Burrell also hopes the voter lists will show E for early voting.

Jennifer Marshall-Nealy said she knew SOTS Thomas before becoming secretary. She is confident that if we ask questions, SOTS Thomas will respond. Hopefully there will be a repository for questions before the 2024 election.

OTHER BUSINESS

The next meeting will be in Windsor on June 13th at 10:00 am.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:09 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue W Larsen

Secretary, Hartford County

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Hopefully there will be a repository for questions before the 2024 election.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:17pm.

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Respectfully submitted

Sue W. Larsen

Secretary, Hartford County