

**MEETING MINUTES
COMMITTEE TO INCREASE VOTER PARTICIPATION
CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
VIA TELECONFERENCE
AUGUST 25, 2020 – 5:30PM**

CALLED TO ORDER BY: Chair, Karen Bartos, at 5:30 via ZOOM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bartos, Christoph, Ergas, Lawler, Hubbard, Thornhill

MEMBERS ABSENT: Seelye, Simonenko

OTHERS PRESENT: City Clerk Pam Smith

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

MOTION by Ergas, support by Lawler to approve the agenda as published.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Minutes of the January 28th – Clerk Smith noted that these would be submitted to the Committee at the next meeting for approval.

Old Business:

A high school voter registration drive was held by the committee and with assistance from the Clerk's staff on February 11, 2020 before the Covid-19 shut down.

New Business:

- a. Election Stats – Clerk Smith reported that FH issued 24,000 Absent Voter Ballots (AV Ballots) and that 18,800 were returned. This represents 76% of the turnout. Overall voter turnout for FH was 39% which is the highest for any August primary. Pam estimates 30,000 requests for AV ballots for November General election and requests are coming in at a rate of about 50 per day. November Ballots are expected in the office on 9/18 and will start going out to voters by 9/24. Chair Bartos commented on the high quality of our entire Clerk Office staff under the excellent leadership of Clerk Smith. Ergas questioned how many ballots were received after the close of elections but were postmarked before 8/4. Clerk Smith will look into this. One poll location will be moved but not consolidated.
- b. Outreach and Education –

The Committee discussed the option of volunteering our time at the office to help the process for the November Election.

The Committee discussed press releases to emphasize the following:

 - Locations of Drop Boxes
 - Emphasize early return of AV ballots
 - Explain in-person voting (at the Clerk's counter), requesting an AV ballot, voting in the booths set up in City Hall and returning AB ballots same day.
 - There was a lot of concern about the USPS and its ability to return ballots on time. Hubbard reported that our mail does go through the sorting facility in Pontiac which lost some machines. Also, that 60/140 local employees were out due to Covid-19. We emphasized the need for voters to return ballots early either via mail or drop boxes. Oakland County is providing prepaid postage for ballots, but envelopes have been printed so postage is being added manually. There was discussion of asking our Postmaster about procedures in place to handle the November increase.
 - We have great videos about AV ballots already available on the FH website. Karen Bartos will contact the City to augment these videos with info about returning ballots early, drop off locations and in-person voting at Clerk's office. We will also ask them how to get these videos out to younger voters ie. Twitter, Tic Toc, Instagram etc
 - We discussed how we could get younger voters involved since they don't usually go to the City website of Facebook page. Pam will ask some college students working in her office. She will contact the NHS teacher at North Farmington HS to get her students to do and circulate a video

on the appropriate social media. As Committee members we can reach out to any community groups to help with this effort.

- Christoph asked if we know how many homeless voters are in FH. She has a friend who works with this community and see if there is a need for our help in their voting process.

c. Election Workers –

Clerk Smith reported that she could use more Election Workers, especially an evening shift after the polls close. Hubbard was going to check if any FH firefighters are able to volunteer for this shift. The committee members noted that would all ask within their community groups for Election Workers, interested people can contact the City Clerk’s Office.

My Vote Counts/Social Media Information Covered in above discussion

Public Comments No comments

Member/Liaison Comments No comments

Move for Adjournment by Hubbard, supported by Christoph to adjourn at 6:25pm. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Chair Karen Bartos