

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, WASHOE COUNTY, NEVADA

FRIDAY 3:00 P.M. MARCH 15, 1996

PRESENT:

Steve Bradhurst, Chairman  
Grant Sims, Vice Chairman  
Joanne Bond, Commissioner  
Mike Mouliot, Commissioner  
Jim Shaw, Commissioner

Betty Lewis, Chief Deputy County Clerk  
John MacIntyre, County Manager  
Madelyn Shipman, Legal Counsel

The Board met in special emergency session in the Commission Chambers of the Washoe County Administration Complex, 1001 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada. Following the pledge of allegiance to the flag of our Country, the Clerk called the roll and the Board conducted the following business:

AGENDA

In accordance with the Open Meeting Law, on motion by Commissioner Shaw, seconded by Commissioner Bond, which motion duly carried, Chairman Bradhurst ordered that the agenda for the March 15, 1996, special emergency meeting be approved.

It was noted that this special meeting was called by the Chairman because of problems that have arisen in the Registrar of Voter's office regarding the mail-in ballots being used to conduct the Presidential Preference Primary election; that when a voter signs the envelope as instructed, the signature "bleeds" through onto the ballot; that the Registrar of Voters has been opening the envelopes and erasing signatures off the ballots; and that action has necessitated the Secretary of State taking over the election in Washoe County.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dean Heller, Secretary of State, stated that the events occurring regarding the Registrar of Voters are unprecedented in Nevada history and thanked Chairman Bradhurst and County Manager John MacIntyre for taking action so quickly. He stated that he has taken charge of the Presidential Preference Primary election; that the ballots received to date have been secured; that normal procedures are back in place; and that it is his intention to have this election go forward as planned and to restore voter confidence and the integrity of the process. Mr. Heller explained that the ballots will be divided into and counted in three groups, i.e., those opened by the Registrar, those handled by the Registrar but not opened, and those received after March 14, 1996; that he has requested the Nevada Division of Investigation to examine the ballots that were opened to determine if there was any tampering that would affect the outcome of the election; and that if they do find evidence of any tampering with the actual votes, he will take whatever steps are necessary to make the election right.

Patty Brock, Washoe County resident, stated that she is very concerned that mail-in voting is an incompetent process with an unsafe ballot and that the secrecy of the vote has been lost. She further stated that this election is not going to truly represent the voters of Washoe County because many people she talked to were not comfortable with the mail-in ballot because the issue of fraud was never addressed. Ms. Brock also stated that wars have been fought over this very issue of open, free and protected ballots and urged the Board to ensure that that freedom is protected for the voters of Washoe County.

96-210 ACCEPTANCE OF RESIGNATION - REGISTRAR OF VOTERS

On motion by Commissioner Bond, seconded by Commissioner Shaw, which motion carried unanimously, Chairman Bradhurst ordered that

the resignation of Brad Lawrence from the position of Washoe County Registrar of Voters be accepted.

96-211 RATIFICATION - DESIGNATION OF ACTING REGISTRAR OF VOTERS AND REQUEST FOR STATE INVESTIGATION OF STATUS OF BALLOTS - INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT WITH STATE OF NEVADA

Deputy District Attorney Maureen Griswold reviewed and explained the provisions of the proposed agreement between Washoe County and the State of Nevada, concerning the assistance of the Secretary of State's office in conducting the Presidential Preference Primary election and answered questions of the Board.

On motion by Commissioner Shaw, seconded by Commissioner Bond, which motion carried unanimously, it was ordered that:

1. The designation of the Secretary of State as Acting Registrar of Voters be ratified;
2. The request to the Secretary of State for the Nevada Division of Investigation to investigate the status of the ballots be ratified; and
3. The Interlocal Agreement between the County of Washoe and the State of Nevada concerning 1 and 2 above, and other matters relating to the assistance of the Secretary of State's Office in the conduct of the Presidential Preference Primary election be approved and Chairman Bradhurst authorized to execute on behalf of Washoe County.

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There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

STEPHEN T. BRADHURST, Chairman  
Washoe County Commission

ATTEST: JUDI BAILEY, County Clerk