



Albemarle County

Legislation Text

File #: 18-196, **Version:** 1

AGENDA DATE: 3/14/2018

TITLE:

Electoral Board and Registrar-Proposed New Voting Precincts and Voting Locations

SUBJECT/PROPOSAL/REQUEST: Public hearing to consider an ordinance to change certain current voting precinct boundaries and to identify new polling places

ITEM TYPE: Regular Action Item

STAFF CONTACT(S): Richardson, Letteri, Kamptner, Blair, Washburne

PRESENTER (S): Peter Wurzer, Electoral Board Chair; Bill Love, Electoral Board Vice-Chair; James Heilman, Electoral Board Secretary; Jake Washburne, Registrar; Clarice Schermerhorn, Elections Manager

LEGAL REVIEW: Yes

REVIEWED BY: Jeffrey B. Richardson

BACKGROUND: The Electoral Board of Albemarle County prioritizes keeping the size of County precincts small enough to improve voter experience and large enough to provide efficiency in holding elections. In response to growth and changing conditions in the County, the Electoral Board is proposing changes regarding precinct and polling place locations. The proposed changes fall into two categories: absolute immediate necessity and compelling urgency.

First, of absolute immediate necessity is the matter of the Belfield voting precinct. The St. Anne's Belfield School is no longer available to serve as the voting location for the Belfield voting precinct; the Electoral Board is proposing the merger of the existing Belfield precinct with the existing Jack Jouett Precinct.

Second, as to compelling urgency, the Electoral Board proposes to subdivide several existing precincts, because the number of registered voters in those precincts is getting sufficiently large that it is presenting congestion for voters in those precincts on election days.

For all of these changes, all affected voters will continue to be in the same Magisterial district, state Senate district, and House of Delegates district. There is an urgency to complete these changes before the end of 2018, as we will be unable to make any precinct changes prior to the next Presidential Election in 2020 after January 1, 2019.

STRATEGIC PLAN: Quality Government Operations: Ensure County government's capacity to provide high quality service that achieves community priorities.

DISCUSSION: In an effort to identify a suitable alternative polling location for the Belfield voting precinct, the Electoral Board evaluated fourteen locations. Of the fourteen locations considered, none were found suitable to replace the St. Anne's Belfield polling place. With no appropriate replacement, the Electoral Board has

devised a solution that involves the merger of the Belfield voting precinct with the existing Jack Jouett Precinct. Jack Jouett Middle School would serve as the voting location for the expanded precinct, and retain the name: Jack Jouett Precinct. Detail for the rationale/justification of the merger is provided in Attachment A, additional information regarding the merger is provided in Attachment B, and maps of the existing Jack Jouett and Belfield precincts and of the proposed Jack Jouett Precinct are included as Attachments C and D, respectively.

Additionally, the Electoral Board has identified three opportunities to provide additional voter capacity in Albemarle County while improving voting line length, wait times, and parking lot congestion.

- Divide Brownsville and Crozet precincts into three precincts - Crozet, Brownsville and Mechums River.
- Divide Cale Precinct into two precincts - Cale and Biscuit Run (western part of current Cale).
- Divide Free Bridge Precinct into two precincts - Free Bridge and Pantops.

Details on the location of each proposed precinct and information on the number of registered voters currently in each existing precinct versus the number of registered voters in each proposed precinct is available in Attachment B. Please refer to Attachments E-I for detailed mapping of these proposed precincts.

The Electoral Board would assert for future consideration that the continuing urbanization of Albemarle County will result in the need for future additional precinct changes and additions. The most recent experience in locating appropriate polling locations demonstrates the need to consider future County construction to anticipate the need for new polling places. As new schools, fire stations, libraries, or other County buildings are planned, the need for flexible space which could also serve as a polling place should be considered.

BUDGET IMPACT: Staff anticipates that there will be both one-time and ongoing costs associated with the proposed changes. A one-time cost of approximately \$5,000.00 for mailed notification of changes to residents in the affected areas, drawn from the reserve for contingency fund. An ongoing budget expense of approximately \$14,000.00 for additional election staff and operational supply needs.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Electoral Board and staff recommend that the Board adopt the attached proposed Ordinance (Attachment K).

ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment A: New Precinct Cover Sheet to BOS
- Attachment B: New Precinct Fact Sheet
- Attachment C: Existing Jack Jouett and Belfield Precinct Map
- Attachment D: Proposed Jack Jouett Precinct Redistricting Map
- Attachment E: Proposed Free Bridge Redistricting Map
- Attachment F: Proposed Free Bridge Redistricting Zoomed Map
- Attachment G: Proposed Crozet Redistricting Map
- Attachment H: Proposed Crozet Redistricting Zoomed Map
- Attachment I: Proposed Cale Redistricting Map
- Attachment J: New Precincts Metes and Bounds Descriptions
- Attachment K: Proposed Ordinance