

Virginia Elections Benchmark Index Workgroup  
Final Minutes  
January 15, 2019

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2           MINUTES

3           The Virginia Elections Benchmark Index Workgroup meeting was held on  
4 Tuesday, January 15, 2019.

5           The first agenda item was to approve the agenda. Chairwoman Robbins asked that  
6 public comment be added to the agenda as Item No. 13. Vice Chair Ablowich *moved to*  
7 *adopt the agenda as modified with Item No. 13 "Public Comment"*. The motion was  
8 seconded and passed unanimously.

9           Chair Robbins asked if everyone had a chance to look over the minutes from the  
10 last meeting and ask if there were any modification that needed to be made. Chair Robbins  
11 *moved to approve the minutes as submitted*. Vice Chair Ablowich seconded and the motion  
12 passed unanimously.

13           The next order of business was to go over the status of the Workgroup's work plan.  
14 Chairwoman Robbins brought up the updated work plan from September 17, 2018, which  
15 was sent out to the Workgroup's members. Chairwoman Robbins asked if everyone was  
16 happy with the status of the work plan. Michele White (GR, Prince William County) asked  
17 the Chairwoman about Teri Smithson (GR, Radford County). Chairwoman Robbins said  
18 Ms. Smithson had resigned from the group citing a lack of time and resources to get to it.  
19 Chairwoman Robbins said the Registrars Association has recommended a replacement for  
20 her. At this moment Christopher E. "Chris" Piper (Commissioner, Virginia Department of  
21 Elections) joined the meeting. Commissioner Piper announced he would not be able to  
22 attend the meeting, but Terry Wagoner (ELECT) was there to represent him.

23           The next order of business was Commissioner Piper's presentation on other states  
24 and election benchmarks, which Shihan Wijeyeratne (Analyst, ELECT) would present in  
25 his absence. Shihan reiterated the Workgroup's goal to find out if other states had programs  
26 similar to the one the Workgroup is trying to establish. Mr. Wijeyeratne said the  
27 Workgroup sent out a survey through the National Association of State Election Officials  
28 on September 28, 2018. Mr. W said of the 19 states that responded to the survey, seven

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29 states indicated they had a similar program in place, many of which were narrow in focus.  
30 Shihan said most of the programs were not aligned with the Workgroup's goals, apart from  
31 Colorado, South Carolina, Wisconsin, and Maryland, the latter two of which Shihan was  
32 able to communicate. Shihan explained the major takeaways from his conversations with  
33 Wisconsin and Maryland and asked the Workgroup if there were any questions. Vice Chair  
34 Ablowich pointed out that other states are evaluating election, rather than people.  
35 Chairwoman Robbins said that this is more applicable to ELECT rather than Registrars.

36 The next order of business was the Post-Election Report. Shihan could not speak to  
37 the entire report but noted that overall the election went smoothly and the data corroborated  
38 what was seen on Election Day. Michelle White acknowledged that Prince William County  
39 was mentioned in the report, but that her only issues were budget related. Chairwoman  
40 Robbins said the report is useful in identifying areas of improvement for future elections.  
41 Terry Wagoner said her goal is to support General Registrars. Michele White offered to  
42 present data from her Electoral Board to the Workgroup and went on to identify budget  
43 related issues for election administration. Chairwoman Robbins noted that budgeting is a  
44 fundamental part of running an election, but it is not a part of their role as defined in  
45 Virginia Code. A general discussion followed covering some of the challenges with  
46 administering an election. Michele White said she hoped the result of the work of the  
47 Workgroup is stronger code to help administer elections. Michele White asked if there was  
48 a consensus in the Workgroup to develop code that would help build better elections. Vice  
49 Chair Ablowich agreed.

50 The next order of business was the PEW Charitable Trust Evaluations of  
51 Elections. Shihan explained which metrics the evaluation measures, and told the  
52 Chairwoman that Virginia ranked 13<sup>th</sup> in the last evaluation. Shihan said Virginia's scores  
53 have been rising consistently, but its ranking has fluctuated and provided reasoning for it.  
54 Vice Chair Ablowich asked if the study is continuously funded. Shihan confirmed that it  
55 is. The Workgroup then discussed some of the metrics used in the PEW Evaluation and  
56 their effect on Virginia's placement in the overall rankings. Chairwoman asked if ELECT  
57 would continue to try and contact Colorado and South Carolina to learn about their

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58 election programs. Shihan confirmed the Department would continue to attempt making  
59 contact.

60 The next order of business was the Workgroup Communication Plan.  
61 Chairwoman Robbins asked Michele White about progress with subgroup formation.  
62 Michele White said she would take it up this week.

63 The next order of business was the review of FOIA requirements for the  
64 Workgroup. Vice Chair Ablowich said that subgroups are bound to the same rules that  
65 the Workgroup adheres to. Shihan said that the ELECT policy team that the subgroups  
66 are compliant with code.

67 The next order of business was to discuss future meeting dates. Chairwoman  
68 Robbins said that the June 30, 2019, meeting would be pushed back as that date is a  
69 Sunday.

70 A Workgroup member asked whether they can get started on work in subgroups  
71 because waiting until May is too long. Michele White suggested that the Workgroup  
72 identify different metrics for the subgroups to use when developing recommendations for  
73 measures that might comprise an index. Ms. White said the Workgroup could consider  
74 compliance, performance, and experience measures when analyzing elections in the  
75 future. The Chairwoman clarified to the Workgroup that the benchmarking is meant to  
76 measure the performance of General Registrars in order to increase uniformity of annual  
77 evaluations, measure the performance of the Electoral Board and its individual members,  
78 evaluate whether there are adequate resources available to General Registrars, and  
79 develop benchmarks to measure the achievement of ELECT's main priorities and  
80 statutory requirements, and recommend process for confidential benchmark analysis to  
81 determine whether performance is adequate or inadequate. The Chairwoman said there is  
82 no question that the benchmarks will measure the performance of individuals.

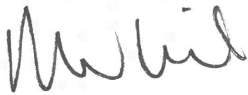
83 The Workgroup discussed future meeting dates again. Chairwoman Robbins set a  
84 goal to meet again on February 26, 2019, during which members would be allocated  
85 tasks.

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86 Chairwoman Robbins opened the floor for public comment. A member of the  
87 public thanked the Workgroup for keeping the meeting public, and commended the group  
88 on their work. The Chairwoman *moved to adjourn the meeting*. The motion was seconded  
89 and the motion passed unanimously.

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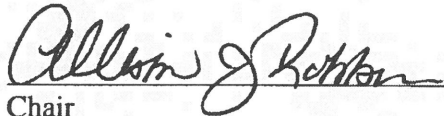
Secretary

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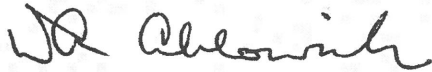
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Chair

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Vice Chair

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