

1 MINUTES

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3 The Virginia Elections Benchmark Index Workgroup (“the Workgroup”) meeting  
4 was held on Monday, September 17, 2018. The meeting was held in the Martha Brissette  
5 Conference room in the Washington building, 1100 Bank St, Richmond, VA 23219.

6 In attendance were the Workgroup members: Allison Robbins, Chair and General  
7 Registrar (“GR”)/Director of Elections (“DOE”) of Wise County; Al Ablowich, Vice Chair  
8 and Electoral Board (“EB”) member of the City of Virginia Beach; Barbara Tabb, EB  
9 member of Prince George County; Michele White, GR/DOE of Prince William County;  
10 Jacqueline Anderson, ICS, Inc.; Christopher E. “Chris” Piper, Commissioner at the  
11 Department of Elections (“ELECT”); Shihan Wijeyeratne, Data Analyst at ELECT; and  
12 Nikki Clemons, Policy Assistant at ELECT. The meeting was called to order at 1:00 P.M.

13 The first order of business was to approve the minutes from the August 10  
14 Workgroup meeting. Ms. White requested the minutes be amended to include her  
15 participation and presence at the meeting, and Vice Chair Ablowich moved the Workgroup  
16 approve the minutes as amended. Mr. Wijeyeratne seconded the motion, and the motion  
17 passed unanimously.

18 The next order of business was for the Workgroup to elect a new secretary. Chair  
19 Robbins explained Ms. Clemons, who was previously selected, was unable to serve as  
20 secretary. Chair Robbins moved the Workgroup elect Ms. White as the secretary of the  
21 Workgroup. Vice Chair Ablowich seconded the motion, and the motion passed  
22 unanimously.

23 The next order of business was the adoption of the Workgroup’s work plan. Chair  
24 Robbins said that she presented the group’s work plan to the State Board of Elections  
25 (“SBE”) during their August 15 meeting. Ms. Anderson suggested that even if the  
26 Workgroup voted to adopt the work plan, that the plan should remain flexible and be  
27 constantly updated and improved as the group progressed in their work. Vice Chair  
28 Ablowich motioned to adopt the work plan and Ms. Tabb seconded the motion. The motion  
29 passed unanimously.

30 The Workgroup then discussed establishing deadlines for the completion of certain  
31 aspects of the plan. The Workgroup discussed how to divide the group into subgroups and

32 comply with FOIA open meeting requirements. Commissioner Piper informed the group  
33 that in order for members to be able to electronically participate in meetings, a quorum  
34 must be held in a public place; the subgroup meetings must also be posted in accordance  
35 with open meeting laws. The Commissioner recommended that if members of the  
36 Workgroup need to talk outside of open meetings, to use Ms. Clemons as a conduit as she  
37 was not a formal member of the Workgroup and could communicate between members  
38 outside of public meetings.

39 Ms. White agreed to work with Teri Smithson, Hanover County GR/Director of  
40 Elections and member of the Workgroup, on developing a communication plan.  
41 Commissioner Piper suggested Ms. White and Ms. Smithson assign members of the  
42 Workgroup to serve on each subgroup, and communicate the designations to Chair  
43 Robbins. Chair Robbins could then officially appoint the members and form the  
44 subgroups.

45 Commissioner Piper informed the Workgroup that the current SBE members would  
46 have their last meeting in December of 2018, and recommended the group give a status  
47 report during that meeting. The Workgroup could then brief the new SBE members in  
48 January, after their appointment, before giving the final report in June. Commissioner  
49 Piper asked Ms. Anderson what the best way would be to develop the outline for the report.

50 Ms. Anderson facilitated a conversation to form an outline, taking suggestions from  
51 the group to create the below guide:

52 [enter picture of the outline created—I don't have it, but Jackie and Michele might.]

53 Vice Chair Ablowich mentioned that the SBE asked the Workgroup to research  
54 other states and the election benchmarks set. Commissioner Piper added that the SBE  
55 asked the Workgroup to consult VA Performs and the Supreme Court, as each group did  
56 similar measurements within the state and could provide useful insight to developing  
57 election benchmarks for Virginia. Chair Robbins asked the Commissioner to reach out to  
58 other states' Secretaries of State to gather information regarding benchmarks. The group  
59 suggested the end of October as the deadline for the formation of the subgroups and  
60 collection of information on other states.

61 Vice Chair Ablowich pointed the group to the research done by the PEW Charitable  
62 Trust on evaluations on elections in different states. Mr. Wijeyeratne offered to send these

63 research reports to the Workgroup after the meeting. The Workgroup focused on the point  
64 in the work plan that asked for the enumeration of the requirements imposed on the GRs,  
65 EBs, and ELECT by laws and regulations. Tracy Howard, GR/Director of Elections for  
66 the City of Radford and member of the Workgroup, previously sent out a list of the division  
67 of responsibilities between EBs and GRs. Ms. White noted that Jason Corwin,  
68 Mecklenburg County GR/Director of Elections, had a document that laid out the division  
69 of responsibilities by locality; Ms. White offered to contact Mr. Corwin for this list for the  
70 Workgroup's use. Commissioner Piper noted that Mr. Wijeyeratne could develop a process  
71 to take localities' budgets and populations into account in gathering information and  
72 indexes.

73 Vice Chair Ablowich asked if in the Workgroup's plan, in regards to evaluating  
74 EBs, would apply to the entire EB or to individual members. Chair Robbins said the EB  
75 had to be evaluated as a whole, but that individual members should also be evaluated. The  
76 Workgroup decided on the following dates for future Benchmark meetings: February 21,  
77 April 18, May 16, and June 30. The Workgroup agreed to complete a draft of the report  
78 for the SBE by May 16; this would give the group time to edit and finalize it before  
79 presenting the final report to the SBE on June 30, 2019.

80 The group then discussed creating the subgroups. Ms. Clemons informed the group  
81 that members' electronic participation in open meetings are limited to 2 meetings per  
82 calendar year; this information would help inform the group in determining how many  
83 subgroups should be developed and which members should be assigned to each.  
84 Commissioner Piper asked Ms. Clemons to work with ELECT's Chief FOIA Officer to  
85 develop a guideline and plan to keep in compliance with FOIA laws, and to provide those  
86 guides to Ms. Smithson and Secretary White in order to create the subgroups.

87 Ms. Tabb moved for the Workgroup to adjourn. Commissioner Piper seconded the  
88 motion, and the meeting adjourned at approximately 2:21 PM. The next meeting will be  
89 on February 21, 2019.

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Secretary

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Chair

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Vice Chair

DRAFT