

Bucks Board of Elections considers provisional ballots

The Bucks County Board of Elections, which consists of Chairman Charles Martin and Commissioners James Cawley and Diane Ellis-Marseglia, conducted a Nov. 12 public meeting in the Doylestown Courthouse to assess the validity of 454 “provisional” ballots and 90 “provisional-absentee” ballots cast during the Nov. 4 General Election.

Those ballots were in addition to the 331,849 total votes that were recorded in Bucks County during an election that “was conducted very well,” according to Martin.

Following an explanation of the provisional ballot process from Board of Elections Director Deena Dean and members of her staff, the board unanimously approved 18 provisional-absentee ballots for the Presidential/Vice-Presidential race only, as they were received after 5 p.m. on Oct. 31 (deadline for absentee ballots) and prior to 8 p.m. on Election Night. Those approvals were made as part of a provision of the 2002 Help America Vote Act

(HAVA).

The Board of Elections also approved, by a 2-0-1 margin (with Martin abstaining), 72 provisional-absentee ballots to be counted despite the voters’ inability to provide voter identification.

The bulk of the agenda was dedicated to 454 provisional ballots, which were broken into the following three categories: fully counted (93), partially counted (42) and rejected (319). The Board of Elections unanimously approved all 93 fully counted provisional ballots (for reasons such as change of maiden name, etc.) as well as all 42 partially counted provisional ballots (for example, showing up to vote at the wrong polling place). The Board of Elections rejected 316 of the 319 provisional ballots cast by individuals who missed registration deadlines, were not registered or were registered in different counties/states.

For a full audio account of the two-hour, five-minute meeting, click the link on the Board of Election page at BucksCounty.org.