

Monroe County Vote Center Committee Public Meeting Notes – Draft

July 24, 2024 6:00 PM

Ellettsville Town Hall, and via Teams

Call To Order

Speaking on behalf of the committee members present, Stacy Kowalczyk welcomed the public to the open meeting 6:02 p.m. Also present in person were committee members Debora Shaw, Stephen Volan, and Alex Workman.

County Clerk Nicole Browne, Election Supervisor Kylie Moreland, and Election Board member Judith Benckart were also present.

Committee member absent: Taylor Bryant, William Ellis, Ami Gandhi, Ilana Stonebraker, Danny Shields, Daniella Workman.

About a dozen members of the public were present, as well as representatives of local media.

Kylie Moreland had prepared a tri-fold handout based on the Committee's suggested text.

Discussion Focused around Six Topics

*** How would vote centers work?**

Similar to early voting

Voters would not be sent away if they showed up at the wrong polling site

Voters who have experience in vote center counties are confused when they encounter precinct-based voting here

Would vote centers replace precincts? Would it change what precinct committeemen do?

When would vote centers take effect?

Several people said that they love early voting (and many head nods in agreement). Could there be more early vote centers?

*** Experiences with precinct-based voting**

Hard to get to poll site after work

Miss the big, old poll books and signing in

Appreciate seeing familiar poll site workers – at early voting, too

*** What should be the trade-off between convenience and cost?**

Anything that makes it easier for people to vote – do it!

Getting people out to vote is more important than saving money.

Avoid long lines to cast a ballot.

Would vote centers incentivize rural voters? This voter lives in rural part of the county; driving 10 minutes to Stinesville or 15 to Ellettsville is OK.

Would long distance to drive discourage seniors, people with young children?

It's hard to get enough poll workers in current arrangement.

Other counties have started by making all polling sites vote centers, then reducing the number as experience suggests.

Ballot-on-demand would be helpful for voters who turn up at the wrong polling site and have to be sent away.

Printing ballots on demand would save costs of pre-printing ballots just in case there is heavy turn-out.

Look carefully at alternatives for low-turnout polling sites (Burgoon, Harrodsburg).

Conduct a survey to find out what rural voters prefer.

*** Where should vote centers be located?**

Each township should have at least one vote center (that would be 11), with more in large numbers of voters.

I would vote close to home (2 people). Two people turned in their responses from the vote center handout.

One voted close to home with a comment "Seems like a good idea. Worried about voters in remote area of the county."

One votes close to home, work, and early vote center with a comment "Whatever makes voting *easier*. (parking in and out and map) I love (heart) early voting at the downtown location vote center Bloomington."

Close to where I can stop for lunch.

People outside core Bloomington expect to drive rather than bike or walk to polling site.

Time in line to vote is more of a concern than how far to drive.

Kylie Moreland lives in Greene County, finds 30 minute drive acceptable to vote.

***Potential impact/benefits of vote centers**

Would this affect voter turnout?

Would this affect early voting? Some counties open vote centers for the week before Election Day.

Clerk Browne: Prior experience with roving early voting location was not endorsed by the Election Board after being tried one year.

Nicole Browne: Voters should make a plan to vote – well in advance of Election Day. Community member observed that voters without Internet access or skill have difficulty finding polling location and other voter information

Nicole Browne and Kylie Moreland: Long lines have not been a problem since before the pandemic. It takes under a minute to check in and print ballot with current equipment. The office is able to tell how busy each poll site is but are not able to know how many people are waiting in lines to get into the polling place. Peak hours are around noon to 1:00, 5:00 to 6:00 p.m.

*** How should people be informed of a switch to vote centers?**

Kylie Moreland: postcard to all residents.

Nicole Browne: community partner organizations.

Kylie Moreland: increase social media dissemination.

Inform voters at prior election; or at least have an announcement of the plan to change.

Improve elections website; Kylie Moreland is working to link directly to state site so voters can check registration, find poll location.

Stacy Kowalczyk thanked the participants for their comments and advice; she closed the meeting at 7:00.

Next County Vote Center Meeting

August 14, 2024 at 5:00 PM

Conference Room 100 B, Showers Building 1st Floor

501 N Morton St, Bloomington, IN 47404

and via Teams