

TO: Shaun Groden, Administrator

FROM: Brent Bogardus & Marie Metzler, Commissioners

RE: Annual Report of 2018

DATE: March 27, 2019

## **GREENE COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS**

### 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

As you may recall, we noted in our 2017 Annual Report that, “2017 saw the return of a more normal cycle of elections following the intenseness of the 2016 presidential election cycle. While 2017 proved to be an extremely busy year, it did not present the level of challenges that we saw in 2016.”

2018 proved to be anything but normal, and once again the Greene County Board of Elections faced numerous challenges.

Our 2018 year began with the Governor calling for a Special Election in April to fill the vacant Assembly seat in the 102<sup>nd</sup> Assembly District. This special election required everything that a normal general election requires. All 25 of our election poll sites (52 Election Districts) were open and in operation from 6:00am until 9:00pm. The Board was required to code ballots for use in the special election, staff all poll sites and tally results.

From there we moved to preparing for the June primary for the 19<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. There was a highly competitive primary to select the Democratic candidate and once again the Board was tasked to prepare for and conduct that election.

The General Election in November generated intense interest and saw huge voter turnout. Greene County was not alone in this as turnout and interest ran high throughout the country and generated more voter involvement than normal gubernatorial election cycles. New registrations and absentee ballot requests reached near record numbers.

The 2018 year also saw the Greene County Board of Elections administer four Village Elections in March and assist area school districts with their budget/board vote in May.

Each of the elections cited earlier in this report include various caucus and/or petition filings, Inspector training, voter registration, absentee ballot preparation and ballot coding activities. Compliance with a number of State Board of Elections reporting requirements throughout the year also require staffs attention.

Staff has also participated in a number of conferences and training sessions conducted by the NYS Election Commissioners Association and NYS Board of Elections in an effort to stay current on ever changing state and federal mandates and changes to the various election laws we are responsible to administer. These Conferences are an invaluable resource to the Commissioners and staff and enable us to meet our responsibilities in the most effective manner possible.

It should be noted here that these conferences and training sessions will become even more valuable and necessary given the extensive changes to state election law made earlier in this current year. The requirement to conduct early voting will be a new challenge for us at the Board. It will also require additional resources to comply with the new laws. As you know, we have alerted both the County Administrator and Legislature of this fact.

We also would like to note as we have in previous reports that our deputies continue the task of programming/coding our election machines saving the county over \$12,000 for each November General Election and several thousand dollars for each smaller election through the year.

As noted previously, we do not directly administer school district elections. However, we do work in a cooperative fashion with districts by providing enrollment lists, voting machines, inspectors and technicians as needed to assist them in conducting their elections. We perform these activities at no operational cost to the county as costs are passed onto the local districts. As stated in past reports, we believe this to be a good example of municipal cooperation in our County.

Outlined below are some of the more significant statistical figures comparing activity over the last three years for comparison purposes.

<b><u>CATEGORY</u></b>	<b><u>2014</u></b>	<b><u>2015</u></b>	<b><u>2016</u></b>	<b><u>2017</u></b>	<b><u>2018</u></b>
Registered Voters	26,815	28,080	29,549	29,337	29,968
Abs. Ballots Sent	1,783	1,442	2,198	1,160	2,053
Abs. Ballots Received	1,352	1,059	1,978	798	1,792
Petitions Processed	46	189	35	94	60
New Registrations	953	1,147	2,926	1,297	2,157

As is our ongoing practice, 2018 saw the Greene County Board of Elections strive to operate in the most efficient and effective manner possible in serving the residents of our county. We do so in the most cost efficient manner possible recognizing the fiscal challenges faced not only by our county government, but by the citizens we serve as well.

In closing we wish to extend our gratitude to Building and Grounds, the Highway Department and Sheriff's Office for the assistance they provide us in storing and moving our voting machines and collecting results on election night. It is only with their assistance that we are able to administer local, state and national elections without expending resources by engaging private outside vendors for these purposes.

Finally, we extend our gratitude to the County Legislature and Administrator for providing us with the resources necessary to fulfill our mandate in assuring the smooth operation of democracy here in Greene County.