



Board of Elections

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January 11, 2024

To the Caroline Town Board:

The Tompkins County Board of Elections is looking at eliminating the Caroline Center Church as a polling place for elections beginning this year. There are several considerations that have led to this proposed action. First and foremost, there are issues with the building and the path to the voting area being ADA compliant. When we assessed the Caroline Center Church for accessibility many years ago, we were basing it on the voting area being located immediately inside the door off of the ramp. This area has since proved not practical and we now use the area nearer the kitchen. There is a ramp connecting the two levels. However the slope of the ramp is too steep and likely be too costly to reconfigure so that it meets ADA standards. The voting area is also rather tight for a person in a wheelchair to navigate. Another problem is that often there is an absolute lack of cell service, so it can be very problematic when trying to get in touch with a poll worker or transmitting election day activity to the Board of Elections.

Absent views to the contrary, we are recommending that the voters in Election District 1 vote at the Brooktondale Fire Hall, where the voters from Election Districts 2 and 3 currently vote. This would mean that the Brooktondale Fire Hall would be the sole polling place in the Town of Caroline on Election Days.

Other reasons for making the Brooktondale Fire Hall the sole polling place in the Town of Caroline are:

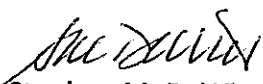

1. The Brooktondale Fire Hall is very well suited for handling all of the voters in the Town of Caroline.
2. The Brooktondale Fire Hall is fairly close to the geographical center of the town.
3. Nearly all of the voters that currently vote at the Caroline Center Church already drive or ride to the polling site. It is in a rural setting and the area is not conducive to pedestrian traffic.
4. It will require fewer poll workers when we are only staffing one site. Poll workers are a scarce commodity and we often have problems finding poll workers to work at the Caroline Center Church.
5. Voters now have other options for voting: Over 70 hours over 9 days where a voter can vote early in person. There is absentee voting for those that are unable to vote in person and now there is Early Voting by Mail which does not require an excuse in order to receive a mail ballot.

It is not uncommon for all of the voters in a town voting at one polling place. All of the voters in the towns of Enfield and Newfield currently vote at one location in their town.

We realize that this is a significant change for many of the voters and we will ensure that they are properly notified. In addition to the annual mailcheck card that we mail out to every voter in the town in early April which would notify the voter of the change in polling place, we would mail each voter a post card in the month before the first election that the change would take place which would notify them of the change in polling place. The post card would also list the other options for voting. We will also put a notice on the entrance doors to the Caroline Center Church on the day of each election in 2024.

We welcome your feedback and would appreciate any suggestions to make this change a smooth transition for the voters in Election District # 1.

Sincerely,

 
Stephen M. DeWitt Alanna CH Congdon
Commissioners of Elections
Tompkins County Board of Elections