

HOWARD COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS MEETING MINUTES

9770 Patuxent Woods Drive, Suite 200
Columbia, MD 21046

Monday, May 24, 2021 – 4:00 pm

Note: *This meeting was held virtually due to the current COVID-19 restrictions and the Governor's directives concerning limiting in-person gatherings & meetings.*

Regular Open Board Meeting

ATTENDEES:

Board Members:

Donna K. Thewes	Board President, Republican Member
Ann M. Balcerzak	Vice President, Democratic Member
Diane L. Butler	Republican Member
Timothy J. Mummert	Republican Member
Raymond M. Rankin	Democratic Member

Staff: Eric C. Brousaides, Esq.	Board Counsel
Charlotte B. Davis	Deputy Director
Phyllis A. West	Board Secretary

Absent: Guy C. Mickley	Election Director (Excused)
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Guests: Kera Bumgrove

CALL TO ORDER AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Board President Donna Thewes called the meeting to order at 4:04 pm with an established quorum present.

Since Board members were in different locations without flags available, the President indicated the Pledge of Allegiance would not be given for this meeting.

WELCOME GUESTS

President Thewes welcomed our guest to the meeting and told her there would be an opportunity to ask questions or make comments later in the meeting if she wished to do so.

APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Copies of the minutes for the April 26, 2021 Regular Open Board Meeting were provided to Board members by electronic mail for their review prior to the meeting. President Thewes asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Ray Rankin motioned to approve the minutes as presented and Tim Mummert seconded the motion.

Action: The minutes for the April 26, 2021 Regular Open Board Meeting were unanimously approved.

ADDITIONS OR CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Board members made no additions or changes to the agenda.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Donna Thewes discussed the upcoming Board Meeting dates for the summer months. There will be a Regular Board meeting held on June 28th, along with an Executive Session. The Board members agreed that the July Board meeting will be cancelled unless any issues arise that need the Board's attention. Donna Thewes stated that there will be no Regular Board meeting in August since members will be participating in the SBE Biennial Conference, and some will be also be attending the MAEO Conference. After the June 28th Meeting, the next Regular Open Board Meeting will be held on September 27, 2021. If conditions permit, she stated that the September meeting may be held in person.

Donna Thewes then discussed the MAEO Conference and how members felt about attending in person. A draft agenda had been provided electronically to members prior to the meeting. Some members stated they are not available to attend, but two members and the Board Counsel indicated they plan to attend. She asked members to complete the registration forms for the Conferences and for those attending in person, to complete the hotel reservation forms and return them to the office as soon as possible.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Charlotte Davis, Deputy Director, summarized the Director's report for Guy Mickley, who was excused from the meeting. A copy of his full report is attached to these minutes.

1. Voter Registration is still on par with our pre-election numbers.
2. Staff is verifying all records entered into MDVOTERS to ensure accuracy.
3. The budget submitted by the Director to the County remains basically the same as requested after his meeting with the County Council.
4. Staff continues to telework, and more staff is coming in daily. The Director expects things will be almost back to normal by August.
5. The new pollbooks committee is still working on the selection process, and hopefully there will be more information in June.
6. New software for the Voting System and holding Mock Elections in November will depend on what and when the State decides on the new system. The Director will keep the Board informed.
7. The State will hold Table Top Exercises in the last quarter of the year, and several of our staff members are helping again with this effort.

8. Howard County will have five Early Voting sites for the next election cycle. The final site location has not yet been selected.
9. Per new legislation passed this year, Maryland will now have a permanent Mail-in Ballot list. The application will have to be changed to accommodate a voter's request to be put on this list. Drop boxes will continue to be used in future elections. More proactive engagement with the student and military populations will also take place, with military voters able to use electronic signatures in the future.
10. No candidates have filed yet at our office, but one person has come in for information.

Ms. Davis asked if there were any questions. Donna Thewes asked if the state has provided any information on reopening guidance. Ms. Davis stated no, but Howard County had provided information this morning, which she will send to Ms. Thewes. Donna Thewes then explained for those who were new what the street verification process entailed to keep the records in MDVOTERS accurate. Diane Butler asked if a PO Box address was allowed for voting, and Ms. Davis explained that it can be used for a mailing address, but a voter must provide a residential address for their registration.

BOARD COUNSEL REPORT

Eric Broussides, Esq., Board Counsel, stated that he had nothing to report.

GUEST QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Donna Thewes asked if our guest had any questions or comments, and she had none.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

President Thewes read the closing statement and asked for a motion to recess the Regular Open Board Meeting so that the Board could convene in closed Executive Session according to the Open Meetings Act General Provisions Article 3-305 (b)(7) to obtain legal advice for addressing administrative issues. A motion to recess the Regular Open Board Meeting to go into Executive Session as per Item 7 was made by Ray Rankin, and Tim Mummert seconded the motion.

Action: Board members voted unanimously to recess the Regular Open Board Meeting at 4:26 pm.

The Regular Open Board Meeting was reconvened at 5:18 pm. President Thewes reported that the purpose of the Executive Session was to approve the minutes of the April 26, 2021

Executive Session and to obtain the advice of Board Counsel on an administrative issue. She stated that the Board will be sending a letter to Donna Duncan at SBE related to the issue.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Donna Thewes asked for a motion to adjourn the Regular Open Board Meeting. Ray Rankin made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Tim Mummert seconded the motion.

Action: Board members unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 5:19 pm.

The next Regular Open Board Meeting of the Howard County Board of Elections will be held on Monday June 28, 2021 at 4:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Phyllis A. West, Board Secretary

Donna K. Thewes, Board President