

**MINUTES**  
**Howard County Board of Elections**  
**8900 100 Parkway**  
**Columbia, Maryland 21045**  
**December 01, 2008**

**Present:**

**Board:**

Ann M. Balcerzak, President  
Donna K. Thewes, Vice-President  
Raymond M. Rankin Member  
Charles M. Coles, Jr., Alternate  
Michael S. Molinaro, Board Attorney  
Vivian L. Dixon, Board Secretary

**Staff:**

Betty L. Nordaas, Election Director  
Guy C. Mickley, Deputy Director

**Guests:**

Derek Simonsen, Howard County Times  
Marc Norman, Howard County Citizens for Open Government

Ms Balcerzak called the meeting to order at 4:04 pm. Four (4) members present, constituted a quorum. Pledge of allegiance followed. President noted that a visitor (Derek Simonsen, Reporter for Howard County Times), was present.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Ms. Balcerzak gave the Board an opportunity to review the October 27, 2008 Minutes prior to calling for motion to approve. Ms. Thewes' motion for approval, with corrected spelling of County Clerk Rappaport's name, was seconded by Mr. Rankin and unanimously approved.

President noted with regard to the quorum presence, Donna Rice specifically asked that the Board be told that a previously planned vacation prevented her from attending. (November 24<sup>th</sup> was regular date for meeting)

**Agenda Changes:** None

**President** Noted that the Monthly Budget handout was provided, asked that they review it and address any questions to Director Nordaas

**Rankin:** Rentals item, is amount for current office space? Noting the amount and raising concern for whether more money was needed.

**Director:** Ms. Nordaas explained the money was “encumbered”, Budget was fine and we have a “whopping” \$1900.00 leftover.

**President:** Although the Agenda indicates “None” for President’s Report, Ms. Balcerzak reported that; the day after General Election, Delegate Elizabeth Bobo, called her office and left a message congratulating the Staff and Board on the “splendid election” HCBE had! (Meeting was turned over to Director Nordaas for Voter Recap).

**Director:** Circulated 3-page Informational Package

1. Howard County had highest voter turnout in the State, 82.42%. A call was received from County Executive Ullman’s Office, congratulating on voter turnout, before results were reported in newspapers.
2. Electronic Poll Book Summary demonstrates that all Howard County polling places opened on time.
3. Voter Registration Count; From the Primary to General Election, almost 16,000 new voters were added.

With regard to what occurred at the Polls, Howard County had visitors from the State Department, Montenegro, Poland and Russia. Information received from the Judges notes indicate the Visitors were well received and hopefully they were educated about our process. Visitors also had the opportunity to meet the Staff and have informal discussion with the Board, over lunch. In general things went well. Although Director has copy of Preliminary Report, the official final LWV Report will be provided at January Meeting (Director will be meeting with the League of Women Voters following Board meeting.).

**Donna Thewes:** In the absence of Donna Rice, Ms. Thewes addressed the issue of crowded and slow moving lines at Vantage House (matter noted in part of LWV unofficial report). Donna Rice attributed this to large number of people needing access to the special machine because of a disability; a larger percentage than there would be at other locations.

**Director/Deputy:** The special needs were factored in and there was an extra machine. This concern will be further addressed as well as possible polling place split. Director will provide official LWV Report at January Meeting.

**President:** Thanked Director for above and expressed her appreciation and pleasure; having been a part of other presidential elections, noting that: because of the “participatory planning”, there were fewer calls to this office and there was a “marked difference, a quieter election.”

**Director's Report Cont'd: Advanced Petition Determination.**

The Board was given a copy of the letter for Marc Norman, from Ms. Nordaas. The signature form that was submitted met all legal requirements to circulate Petition, for signatures. The group sponsoring the petition may get signatures, and if within 60-days they are able to submit the 5,000 or 2500, depending on how well they handle their collection of signatures, the Bill will not become Law on the 61<sup>st</sup> day. There will be a Referendum on the ballot. Letter will be given to Mr. Norman, who was granted permission to address the Board on the Petition, and was scheduled to arrive between 4:15/4:30 PM.

**President:** We will continue the order of business and allow Mr. Norman to speak when he arrives. When is an answer, from the Attorney General's Office, concerning inclusion of Howard County Language, anticipated?

**Director:** Verbal answer has been received, but nothing in writing to date. Director deferred to Mr. Molinaro, for further comment.

**Counsel:** Telephonic contact Assistant Attorney General, Sandra Brantley, indicated she didn't see any "preemption" problem with the extra requirement in Howard County Code and would be so advising State Board Officials. Also indicated she had not put anything in writing. Request for a copy of written advice was promised.

**President:** Will the Petition, which addresses Council Bill 58-2008 and zoning changes for a Turf Valley Shopping Center, have a chilling effect?

**Attorney:** The Board and Election Officials have statutory duties to perform and as far as the impact of those decisions, that's not something that enters into *the decision*.

**Attorney's Report:** None

**President:** With Board consensus, an Executive Session convened at 4:25 PM to address a personnel and legal matter, and agreeing to reconvene to Open upon Mr. Norman's arrival.

Board recessed Executive Session and returned to Open Session at 4:42 PM for Mr. Norman to address the Board. Mr. Norman thanked the Director and Deputy Director for their assistance in the Petition process. Concerns rose about the Board's responsibility to support the Petition. Ms Balcerzak explained the Boards commitment to abide by the State and County Election Laws and Regulations.

**Executive Session Action(s):** Board voted unanimously to forward the names of persons deemed to have violated the Election Laws of Maryland to the HC Attorney General's office, and courtesy copy to SBE.

The next meeting of the Howard County Board of Elections is scheduled for January 26, 2009 at 4:00 PM in the Howard County Board of Elections Boardroom. There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made, seconded and unanimously agreed upon. Meeting Adjourned at 5:52 PM.

Respectively submitted,

*Vivian L. Dixon 1/26/09*  
Vivian L. Dixon, Board Secretary

*Ann. M. Balcerzak*  
Ann M. Balcerzak, President