

HOWARD COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

MEETING MINUTES

9770 Patuxent Woods Drive, Suite 200

Columbia, MD 21046

Wednesday, December 16, 2015 -- 11:00 am

Regular Open Board Meeting

PERSONS ATTENDING:

Board Members:

Donna K. Thewes – Board President
Ann M. Balcerzak – Board Vice President
Patrick R. Mullinix – Republican Member
Michael S. Molinaro – Board Counsel
Diane L. Butler – Republican (Substitute)

Absent:

Raymond M. Rankin – Democratic Member (Substitute – Excused)
Charlotte B. Davis – Deputy Director (Excused)

Staff:

Guy C. Mickley – Director
Phyllis A. West – Acting Board Secretary

Visitors: Joel Hurewitz
David Zinner

OPEN SESSION: Board President Donna Thewes called the Board Meeting to order at 11:21 am with an established quorum present. The Pledge of Allegiance was given and no changes to the agenda were made.

President Thewes then introduced the two visitors at the meeting and gave each an opportunity to speak to the Board. First, David Zinner provided a handout to attendees providing a synopsis of the December 14, 2015 Washington Post article titled *Maryland Says Voting Machines Are On Track*. He felt some statements made could lead to the public's losing confidence in the new voting system. Mr. Zinner suggested that the Board release a statement to the media which would also be sent to election judges, rebutting disputed issues and affirming confidence in the system. The Board discussed the issue and it was decided that Guy

Mickley will include information pertaining to these concerns in a general email to election judges. It was felt that currently ongoing public demonstrations of the equipment will do more to inform the public than a response to the newspaper

Next, Joel Hurewitz asked for an update on an issue he had previously brought before the Board concerning his request to change precinct polling places in and around D/P 5-08 (Bryant Woods Elementary School). The Board President apologized for the delay in mailing him a letter regarding the Board's decision reached at their November meeting. President Thewes indicated that due to the rollout of a new voting system in the state, the need to replace Harmony Hall as a polling place and subsequently notify all affected voters of this change, plus implementation of many new procedures including same day voter registration, the Board felt there was not sufficient time to address Mr. Hurewitz's request prior to next year's election. Ms. Thewes indicated the Board takes his concerns seriously, and has voted to address the issue after the 2016 elections.

Mr. Hurewitz then mentioned errors in the Board minutes posted to the Board of Elections website. The President thanked him for bringing this to the Board's attention. The Director and Board members stated that the minutes would be carefully reviewed and corrected, if needed. Once the new Board Secretary is in place, this will be resolved.

UPDATES and CORRESPONDENCE: President Thewes indicated there were no updates or correspondence to report.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: President Thewes had nothing to report to the members. She then turned the meeting over to Director Guy Mickley.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Mr. Mickley updated the Board concerning the new voting system and other issues as follows:

- Howard County has received all equipment assigned from the state;
- Over the last few days, staff has been doing equipment checks on voting booths and replacing bungee cords where needed;
- Howard County will be conducting a "load" test of equipment over the next few days to determine how long it takes to acquire images on the 4 & 8 gigabyte memory sticks. Currently it appears to be taking longer for larger counties than smaller ones due to the number of images captured, which would impact Howard County. So far it has taken quite a bit of time in our tests;
- Judge training will begin in February 2016;
- Planning for the FY2017 budget will begin in January 2016 and a proposed budget will be submitted to the County in February.

COUNSEL'S REPORT: Board Counsel Mike Molinaro stated he had nothing to report.

OLD/UPDATED BUSINESS: Donna Thewes asked if Board member Ray Rankin needed to sign the amended bylaws, which he had already approved. Mike Molinaro stated that another Board member could sign at Mr. Rankin's direction and with his authorization. Ann Balcerzak called Mr. Rankin, and he authorized President Thewes to sign the document on his behalf. The original document will be sent to the State Board of Elections.

Approval of the November 23, 2015 minutes was deferred until the January 2016 meeting.

NEW BUSINESS: There was no new business.

ADJOURNMENT: President Thewes called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made by Patrick Mullinix and seconded by Diane Butler. The Board unanimously approved the motion to adjourn the Regular Open Board Meeting at 11:54 a.m.

The next scheduled Regular Open Board Meeting will be on January 25, 2016 at 4:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Phyllis A. West, Board Secretary

Donna K. Thewes, Board President