

HOWARD COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

MEETING MINUTES

9770 Patuxent Woods Drive, Suite 200
Columbia, MD 21046

Thursday, January 28, 2016 – 4:00 pm
(Rescheduled from January 25 due to inclement weather)

Regular Open Board Meeting

ATTENDEES:

Board Members:

Donna K. Thewes	Board President, Republican Member
Patrick R. Mullinix	Republican Member
Raymond M. Rankin	Democratic Substitute
Diane L. Butler	Republican Substitute
Michael S. Molinaro	Board Counsel

Absent:

Ann M. Balcerzak	Vice President, Democratic Member (excused)
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Staff:

Guy C. Mickley	Director
Charlotte B. Davis	Deputy Director
Phyllis A. West	Acting Board Secretary

CALL TO ORDER AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Board President Donna Thewes called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm with an established quorum present. The Pledge of Allegiance was then given.

APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Draft copies of the minutes from the November 23, 2015 and December 16, 2015 meetings were provided to Board member by electronic mail prior to the meeting and a paper copy was made available for each at the meeting. Members had no changes to the minutes. Ray Rankin motioned to accept the minutes of both meetings as presented, and Patrick Mullinix seconded the motion.

Action: The minutes were accepted as presented.

ADDITIONS OR CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Board members offered no additions or changes to the agenda.

CORRESPONDENCE

Board members were given a copy of a Courtesy Reminder email from Jared DeMarinis, Director, Division of Candidacy and Campaign Finance for the Maryland State Board of Elections, reminding them to complete and submit their 2015 Financial Disclosure Statement Forms by May 2, 2016 (extended due date since April 30th falls on a Saturday).

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Donna Thewes had nothing to report to the members. She then turned the meeting over to Director Guy Mickley.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT (see attached)

Guy Mickley provided Board members with a copy of his Director's Report, the January Monthly Statistical Report, a budget update report for the current budget year and a budget submission report for FY 2017 which was recently submitted to the County.

Mr. Mickley provided an update on the issues identified in his report. Board members had further discussion on the following issues:

- **NVSR Project** – President Thewes asked several questions concerning Same Day Registration. Director Mickley indicated that names in the poll books will include voters pre-qualified by SBE using selection criteria from MVA, AOC, Social Security and others. Voters must have a current Maryland Driver's License or ID, or they will vote a provisional ballot. If the voter has moved and not updated their driver's license, they can provide HAVA approved identification documents (e.g. utility bill with their name and new address, etc.) and have ten days to provide their updated ID. A Board member asked about confidential voters, and Mr. Mickley explained why some individuals become confidential voters (e.g. police, judges, etc.), and how the voting process works for that type of voter at the polls.
Donna Thewes indicated she was pleased that staff members will be used at the Early Voting locations. She also indicated that if Board members can be of assistance for Voter Outreach in the county, they would be pleased to do it. Several Board members concurred and indicated they would be available to help.
- **New Hires** – President Thewes asked if the newly hired contingents were returning employees. Guy Mickley indicated that several contingent staff members remain to help with the election, and that three of the new hires have been Chief Election Judges, so they have some experience.
- **Budget** – Donna Thewes asked if the ballots were included in the state's budget projections. Mr. Mickley said they were, but marking pens were not. Each county will be purchasing their own supply of pens.

BOARD COUNSEL REPORT:

Michael Molinaro, Esq. reported on two items. First, he received correspondence from Nikki Charlson, Deputy Administrator at SBE, indicating that a series of bi-weekly telephone conference calls will be held with Local Board Counsels over six to eight weeks. He indicated that if Board members or staff has any questions or issues they want him to address on these calls, they should let him know. Mr. Molinaro will advise members when the dates are set. Guy Mickley indicated that this year Directors will be included on these calls, which was not the case in the past.

Mr. Molinaro then updated the Board on the Baltimore County zoning petition issue, indicating he has been told there are sufficient signatures to place the issue on the ballot. No advance determination was requested by the petitioner to his knowledge. This was confirmed by Guy Mickley, who spoke to Baltimore County's Director.

OLD BUSINESS

Donna Thewes thanked Phyllis West for her review and corrections to the Howard County Board of Elections Bylaws to ensure they are accurate and conform to the State Board of Elections requirements. In the bylaws, under Section 3.2 – Rules of Order, A. Quorum, a section from the state template has been added to include quorums for meetings of the board of canvassers. Formatting and other minor issues have also been corrected. After discussion, Ray Rankin made a motion to ratify the revised bylaws, which was seconded by Patrick Mullinix.

Action: Board members voted to ratify the revised Bylaws. Ms. West will inform members via email when the bylaws are ready for signature and members can come into the office to sign the official copies prior to the next Board meeting. The bylaws will then be submitted to the State Board of Elections.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

With no other issues to address, President Thewes requested that a motion be made to close the Regular Open Board meeting at 4:54 pm so that the Board could meet in Executive Session, according to the Open Meetings Act §10-508(a), to discuss an employment issue for the Board of Elections. Ray Rankin made a motion to convene in Executive Session, which was seconded by Diane Butler. A quorum was present.

Action: The Board voted to convene in Executive Session.

At the conclusion of the Executive Session, the Board reconvened the Open Board Meeting at 5:05 pm and announced that Phyllis West was offered and accepted the position of Board Secretary. Board members offered their congratulations.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, President Thewes asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Diane Butler offered the motion, which was seconded by Ray Rankin.

Action: The Board unanimously voted to adjourn the Board meeting at 5:05 pm

The next regular open meeting of the Howard County Board of Elections is scheduled for Monday, February 22, 2016 at 4:00 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Phyllis A. West, Board Secretary

Donna K. Thewes, Board President

Director's Report- February 22, 2016

1. NVSR Project- Several changes.
 - i. Change in Use of BMDs- We no longer will be using the BMDs exclusively for early voting. Because of the problem with displaying only seven candidates on a page, and the "more" button functionality associated, we will be using all paper ballots for both early voting and election day. There will still be one BMD at all early voting centers for use by visually impaired voters.
 - ii. The warehouse staff has been busy making sure that all equipment is in the carts for all precincts and that it is entered into our inventory database. This process is almost complete.
 - iii. The judge manual has been finalized and a copy is provided to you. I will talk about judge training under election judges.
 - iv. Voter Outreach- The office continues to conduct voter outreach events throughout the county. For the month of March, we have a limited schedule due to staff is no longer able to leave and do functions with everything going on in the office. The folks that were hired to do voter outreach are the only people going out, and they will continue to go out 1-2 times a week through March. No one will be doing voter outreach in April.
2. Voter statistics- these statistics encompass the month of February to date. No confirmation cards can be sent out and no voters can be made inactive at this point by state law.
3. Judges- We are "pretty good" on judges. What this means is that if we were to hold the election tomorrow, we would have enough to hold the election with barely any noticeable difference. Early voting continues to be full. We currently have 77 vacancies for election day across the county, but are getting calls daily for folks who want to be a judge. These vacancies all occurred in the past two weeks as we called judges that had not signed up for training classes and they quit. We have put fliers in all the Howard County libraries, community centers and senior centers, as well as the Giants in the area to get more judges. We will continue recruitment of judges, as enough is never quite enough. Judge training has started and we have conducted most of the voting judge and provisional judge trainings with good success. We have, to this point, conducted two check-in judge trainings- the first day is today. I recommend if anyone wants to come to a training class, they come to a Chief Judge class, as you get to see all the jobs in a nutshell.
4. Staff- Our new contingent staff has started and they immediately were put to work with various tasks, most all having to do with putting training class manuals together, or calling judges to schedule training class. They have been a tremendous help. Also, a general note- Thank the employees when you get a chance. Everyone on this staff has been working up to their full potential this election cycle. I feel confident I have the best staff in the State, and they deserve accolades any time there is an opportunity.
5. Budget- The State reduced what our share of the voting system will be for next year from 951,000 to 687,000, so I was able to report a reduction in my budget request to the county for next Fiscal Year...but...with the change in Early Voting, we needed to hire an additional 200 judges for early

voting for going back to paper, which meant I had to add an additional 27,000 to next Fiscal year's budget. The County is aware of both and is very understanding of the moving targets in our budget.

6. Absentee- We currently list 1053 voters that have applied for an Absentee ballot for the Primary Election. This is actually a little higher than anticipated at this point. I still anticipate less than or right around 2000 for the Primary Election.
7. Sample Ballot- The request for bid for the Sample Ballot through the county will hit the streets today.
8. Advertising for Early Voting- We have decided to advertise in the same papers we did the past several elections for early voting, as it seems to work. They are the Baltimore Sun papers (Sun, Laurel Leader, Howard County Times, Columbia Flier), and the Beacon. We also are in conversation with the Office on Aging to see if we can get something in the Senior Center newsletters.
9. Website upgrade has occurred, but it is at best a work in progress. It is slow, and there are things that are not working quite right on our website at this point. Val and I have been in contact with the County and the vendor responsible for the change, and they are working on fixing the issues.