

HOWARD COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

MEETING MINUTES

9770 Patuxent Woods Drive, Suite 200
Columbia, MD 21046

Monday, May 23, 2016 – 4:00 pm

Regular Open Board Meeting

ATTENDEES:

Board Members:

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

Staff:

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

Visitors: David Zinner

CALL TO ORDER AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Board President Donna Thewes called the meeting to order at 4:03 pm with an established quorum present. The Pledge of Allegiance was then given.

GUEST COMMENTS TO THE BOARD

David Zinner stated he worked as a judge on Election Day and twice during Early Voting. He provided the Board with an overview of voting activities at his polling place at Long Reach High School. There were no major issues and very little waiting in line for voters. Mr. Zinner discussed a few minor issues, such as problems tearing off some ballots, a no-show election judge who had to be replaced, etc. When he had questions or issues, his rover, Ray Rankin, or Guy Mickley if Ray was not available, quickly answered his questions or told him how to resolve the issue. He stated that he would like to see the polling places in the gym and cafeteria combined at his polling location.

Mr. Zinner said they had a great team of judges at this location and overall gave the election process an "A" for this Primary Election. Donna Thewes thanked him for his input and service as an election judge and Board members unanimously concurred.

APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES

A draft copy of the minutes from the March 21, 2016 meeting was provided to Board members 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 as presented and Diane Butler seconded the motion.

Action: The minutes were unanimously accepted as presented.

A draft copy of the minutes from the April 26, 2016 meeting was provided to Board members 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 as presented and Patrick Mullinix seconded the motion.

Action: The minutes were unanimously accepted as presented.

ADDITIONS OR CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Board members offered no additions or changes to the agenda.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to discuss.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Donna Thewes reminded members of the upcoming MAEO Annual Conference at the Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay Resort in Cambridge, Maryland, schedule for June 19-22, 2016. She stated that there would be no Board meeting held at the MAEO Conference. After discussion, it members also agreed to cancel the June meeting of the Board. The next regular Board meeting will be held on Monday, July 25, 2016. Guy Mickley indicated that the Board Secretary had registration forms if needed.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT (see attached)

Guy Mickley provided Board members with a copy of his Director's Report and the July Monthly Statistical Report. He then discussed the issues identified in his report and Board members had questions as noted below:

- ***NVSR Project – Election***-- Guy Mickley stated that in addition to his written report, he wanted to offer kudos to the trucking company, which did a very good job for this election. Staff will meet next week to discuss lessons learned and to refine processes if needed.
- ***Election Night Reporting*** – Guy Mickley reviewed his report and the issues on election night when the State's website designed for live results had problems receiving data. Several Board members asked questions about the cause and solutions of the issues. He stated that in spite of these issues, the processing was finished in about the same time as the last election, with 100% of the precincts reporting. As indicated in his report, he also discussed this issue with the County Council. For the General Election we will partner with the County IT Department to ensure another backup system will be in place to allow

posting of results to the website. This will be done at minimal cost to this office. President Thewes indicated she supported this additional backup process to ensure that data is available in a timely way to the public. Several Board members indicated that there would be even more interest in the General Election results.

Director Mickley stated that for the General Election he is changing the process for returning voting data after the polls close. Rovers and “closers” will collect this information and return it to this office, rather than judges taking it to regional centers. That way the judges can simply focus on closing the polling places. Board members asked some specific questions about staging of staff members, whether there would be changes in the chain of custody (no), and how many people would be doing this. Ann Balcerzak asked if Board members could help with this process, and Mr. Mickley indicated he planned to ask the Board members to assist with this process. He indicated that there are 98 actual precincts located at 70 sites and there will be approximate 30 people collecting the voting information after the polls close for the General Election.

- **Budget** – Director Mickley discussed his budget work session with the County Council and indicated that our budget has been reduced this year. Council members had no budget questions. Council members did have some election related questions concerning the results reporting. Board members discussed the importance of getting the election results out correctly as well as in a timely way.
- **Voter Statistics** -- Mr. Mickley indicated that since the election has not yet been certified by the State Board of Elections, we cannot input any registrations or changes into the system. Numbers are the same as pre-election statistics except for the inclusion of same day registrations during early voting and provisional voters. Donna Thewes indicated same day registrations provided some interesting data. Diane Butler stated that many people didn’t understand why they can’t change their party during the primary as part of same day registration and that more education was needed. Guy Mickley indicated this election generated more interest and we had more provisional voters than in the past.
- **Judges** – Guy Mickley indicated that the Howard County Election Judges did an excellent job during this year’s Primary Election. Payments have been processed and should be mailed to judges shortly.
- **Baltimore City Election** – Guy Mickley was asked by the State Board to take the lead for local LBE volunteers during the reconciliation process in Baltimore City. A total of 14 Howard County BOE staff members assisted during that process. He indicated that he has a new appreciation for the work of our judges and staff since he participated in the organization and reconciliation of their voting documents after the election. Board members asked a number of questions about the issues Baltimore City experienced. Mr. Mickley provided an overview of how he and our staff helped SBE and the Baltimore City Election Board during their short term volunteer assignment, which is covered in his report.

- **League of Women Voters** – He stated that the League of Women Voters was very impressed with the preparation work at our office and with the activities at the polling places during the Primary Election.
- **Absentee Voting** – The Board of Canvassers will convene shortly to handle processing on several Absentee Ballots which arrived after the regular canvasses were closed.
- **Miscellaneous Election Issues** – Donna Thewes and Diane Butler discussed concerns about signage issues at several locations including The Bain Center and Lime Kiln Middle School. The Director indicated there he will look into the Bain Center, but advised the Board there was a very large sign in front of the Center. Lime Kiln had the 7 signs stolen overnight and once we realized that, they were replaced during Election Day. He also said due to the many candidate signs posted near our signs, which are put there after we post our signs, this can make it more difficult for voters to see our directional signage. He indicated he will have more signs available at polling places for the General Election.

Diane Butler stated that people were going in the wrong door at Howard High School and having to walk a long way to get to the polling place. Guy Mickley said he would look into this and additional signage might help.

BOARD COUNSEL REPORT:

Mike Molinaro, Esq., indicated there was nothing to report. He then stated that his contract as counsel will expire in July and will need to be renewed. President Thewes and the Board indicated they would like to renew his contract and Mr. Molinaro indicated that he will draft a new contract for Board approval.

Guy Mickley then mentioned that Mr. Molinaro would be part of a panel discussion of LBE attorney's discussing petitions and legal election issues at the upcoming MAEO Conference.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

RECESS OF BOARD MEETING TO CONVENE BOARD OF CANVASSERS MEETING

Donna Thewes asked for a motion to recess the Board meeting so that the Board of Canvassers meeting could be convened to address several Absentee Ballot issues. Ray Rankin made a motion to recess the meeting, which was seconded by Diane Butler.

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

At the conclusion of the Board of Canvassers Meeting, President Thewes reconvened the Board meeting at 5:19 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Action: The Board unanimously voted to adjourn the Board meeting at 5:20 pm.

The next regular open meeting of the Howard County Board of Elections is scheduled for Monday, July 25, 2016 at 4:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Phyllis A. West, Board Secretary

Donna K. Thewes, Board President

Director's Report- May 23, 2016

1. NVSR Project- Election

- i. We did not have any scanners go down on Election Day. We did have a handful that experienced jams during the election, but our rovers were able to immediately take care of the problems.
 - ii. The warehouse staff has gotten everything back from the election, and has gone through each and every cart and transfer case to determine that we have received everything back to the office that was sent out.
 - iii. Lessons Learned- the office continues to gather a list of items that we will talk about during an office-level lessons learned meeting. We will continue to refine processes to make things easier for the office and the judges alike.
 - iv. Election Night Reporting- On election night, we had an issue where the website that the State designed for us through ES&S for live results crashed. We were unable to recover until the morning, when I had the staff unlink from that website and link to the Statewide results website, which unfortunately, also encountered an issue. The County Council talked with me about this, and this office will partner with the County IT Department to ensure that we have a backup system in place for the general, which will simply be handing off a PDF of the results to someone to scan and place on the website. We also have already designed a plan to have the results come into our office faster. The rovers will be gathering the sticks from the polling places and bringing them directly to our office instead of having the judges bring the m to a regional center. We will also have several "closers" out in the field to assist with this process. I do think it is important to point out that we had 100% of our results on Election Night, and we finished at roughly the same time that we always finish.
2. Voter statistics- these statistics encompass the month of May to date. Please note that because the election is not certified statewide, we are not allowed to input any information into the system, which is why the numbers look like they did before the election with the exception of same day registrations and provisionals which are included in the totals.
 3. Judges- The judges pay was sent over to the County today. They will be cutting checks for the judges either this week or next week.
 4. Budget- I had my budget work session with the County Council on Monday, May 9. They did not ask me any questions about the budget at all after my intro, but did ask me a few election related questions- mainly about election night reporting of results.
 5. Baltimore City Election- We were asked to assist with the organization and the reconciliation of Baltimore City's Primary Election documents and the office sent 3 people to help organize, and over the course of 4 days we sent 14 people to reconcile precincts and early voting centers. I was asked to take the lead on the reconciliation process for all the locals at the City warehouse. The main issue that was found was generally that it appeared as though many provisional ballots were sent through the scanner erroneously on Election Day. There also are provisional ballots that were not

canvassed. I believe that the City is going to have another session of the Canvassing Board this week to vet the rest of these ballots.

6. League of Women Voters Site Surveys- A copy of the findings from the site surveys that the league of women voters did for the Primary Election is in your handouts. They seemed to be very impressed with the office and our preparation for the election. We have not had a chance to go through all of the surveys as of this time, but as usual, we will touch all of them before the General Election.
7. Absentee Ballots- Late Arrivals- There are absentee ballots that arrived to the office past the deadline that the Board of Canvassers must convene and vote on.
8. The MAEO Conference is June 19-22. The Board secretary has the registration forms.