

HOWARD COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

MEETING MINUTES

9770 Patuxent Woods Drive, Suite 200
Columbia, MD 21046

Monday, October 24, 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: None

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

A draft copy of the minutes from the September 26, 2016 meeting was provided to Board members by electronic mail prior to the meeting and a paper copy was made available to each member at the meeting. Members had no changes to the minutes. Diane Butler made a motion 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 reviewed early voting assignments for Board members. Diane Butler and Ann Balcerzak will visit the Bain Center, Patrick Mullinix and Ray Rankin will visit Miller Library and Donna Thewes will cover Ridgely's Run Community Center. Ann Balcerzak offered to help at Ridgely's Run if needed. Donna Thewes then discussed Board assignments to visit polling places on Election Day and the importance of these visits to help judges and staff if needed.

She then reviewed Absentee and Provisional Ballot Canvassing Dates: November 10th – Absentee Canvass 1; November 16th Provisional and start of Absentee Canvass 2; and November 18th Absentee Canvass 2 continued. Director Mickley indicated that we can now start the second Absentee Canvass on the same day as the Provisional Canvass. Donna Thewes stated that members should plan for a full day of Canvassing on November 16th and Board members concurred.

She asked Guy Mickley to review the rules for Challengers and Watchers, which he did. He asked Donna Thewes and Ann Balcerzak to contact the Central Committees to have them provide us with the names of any individuals they designate as challengers and watchers. Mike Molinaro asked if the required certificates are site specific. Director Mickley indicated they are but that individuals can have multiple sites designated on their certificates. Board members then asked several questions concerning the process if someone should be challenged. Guy Mickley reviewed how this would be handled and said he will get a phone call concerning any issues from the chief judge and would go to the polling site if needed.

Board members then asked several questions concerning voter counts at the polling places. Mr. Mickley stated that these will be posted on the wall at each polling site at 11:00 am and 4:00 pm where the public can view them. They are not posted on the website per SBE policy.

At the Board's request Mr. Mickley then reviewed the political sign posting policy at polling places (they must be at least 100 feet from the polling place entrance) and members discussed some of the issues related to signage. This including political signage too close to facility entrances and exits which can create a driving hazard. Guy Mickley reviewed how these issues are handled and stated that additional police have been assigned for the election. This will hopefully help to deter vandalism and any other problems. He also discussed this issue with county representatives. He stated he personally makes visits to polling places the evening before the election to check on sites. Judges and Rovers also check on signage prior to opening of the polls and throughout Election Day and Early Voting. Ray Rankin asked if Rovers could have the names of officers assigned to their areas. Mr. Mickley stated that the police go into each polling place where they are assigned and provide their name(s) to the chief judges.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Guy Mickley provided Board members with a copy of the September Monthly Statistical Report and reported on the following:

1. NVSR and Warehouse – We are ready to go with shipping voting equipment. Pollbooks are going through the L&A process in the office, then being staged with other equipment to start deliveries on Wednesday afternoon, October 26th to the three Early Voting Centers.
2. Registration – We now have surpassed 210,000 active voters in Howard County, a new record.
3. Absentee Ballots – Charlotte Davis reported we have sent 9847 ballots to date and more are being sent every day.
4. Judges – We currently have a pool of 60 alternates available to help fill the cancellations that are coming in. Mr. Mickley stated he has added an additional voting judge to each polling location.
5. Budget -- The Director indicated we have had minimal spending to date from this year's budget. Expenditures have included new plastic supply boxes and staff shirts for Election Days.
6. Roy Smith will provide training for "closer" responsibilities after today's Board meeting to Board members who would like to participate.

BOARD COUNSEL REPORT

Mike Molinaro, Esq., reported that the State Board of Elections has held two telephone conference calls with LBE attorneys to date and that these have been helpful and informative. A final call will be held on November 2, 2016. Two items of note from last week's call were that delegations of foreign visitors will be visiting polling places on Election Day in Maryland. Guy Mickley then stated that Howard County was chosen by the GAO and State Board of Elections to be one of a few Maryland counties to participate in these visits, which were last done in Howard County in 2006. Board members asked if they could assist with the visits and Mr. Mickley stated that the visitors prefer not to have escorts. Ann Balcerzak asked him if they had applied for Challenger and Watcher certificates, and he indicated that they had. She then asked where they were coming from. Mike Molinaro indicated they were from the Organization of American States and possibly Slovenia.

Mr. Molinaro then said the other item of note is that throughout the state this year there have been more write-in votes, especially in the Baltimore City mayoral race. Guy Mickley stated that a list of certificated write-in candidates will be placed in each voting booth.

Finally, Mr. Molinaro stated that he is sending a letter to Judge Gelfman regarding on call availability if there should be any emergency needs during the election.

OLD BUSINESS

Guy Mickley stated that he has heard that in Baltimore City, a write-in candidate was creating stickers with their name for voters to apply to their ballots when voting. He asked Board members to let him know if they hear of anyone doing this or should see anything at the polling places, as this could potentially damage the voting equipment.

NEW BUSINESS

Diane Butler has several questions concerning voter concerns posed to her regarding alleged voter fraud and how she should answer these questions. Guy Mickley reviewed some of the processes in place to prevent this, including MVA and Social Security checks, DHMH reports regarding death notices, etc. Board members discussed these issues and asked Director Mickley several questions regarding the processes in place to prevent these problems. Mr. Mickley suggested concerned voters can call the State Board of Elections or our office if they need additional information. Ann Balcerzak suggested that perhaps there could be a few talking points provided to Board members to answer such questions, which Diane Butler agreed would be beneficial. He indicated he would contact the State Board of Elections to ascertain if there is something prepared that they can provide.

PRIMARY BOARD OF CANVASSERS MEETING

Donna Thewes asked for a motion to recess the Regular Open Board Meeting so that the Board of Canvassers Meeting could be convened. Diane Butler made a motion to recess the meeting, which was seconded by Ray Rankin.

Action: The Board unanimously voted to recess the Regular Open Board Meeting at 4:55 pm.

At the conclusion of the Primary Board of Canvassers Meeting, President Thewes reconvened the Regular Open Board Meeting at 4:56 pm.

President Thewes reported that during the Board of Canvassers meeting the minutes of the last Post Certification Board of Canvassers Meeting held September 26, 2016 had been approved and that the Primary Board of Canvassers Meeting had been adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, President Thewes asked for a motion to adjourn the Regular Open Board Meeting. Patrick Mullinix made the motion to adjourn, which was seconded by Ray Rankin.

Action: The Board unanimously voted to adjourn the Regular Open Board Meeting at 4:57 pm.

The next Regular Open Board Meeting of the Howard County Board of Elections is scheduled for Tuesday evening, November 8, 2016 (Election Day) at approximately 9:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Phyllis A. West, Board Secretary

Donna K. Thewes, Board President