

HOWARD COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

MEETING MINUTES

9770 Patuxent Woods Drive, Suite 200
Columbia, MD 21046

Monday, March 27, 2017 – 4:00 am

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 (arrived late)
Raymond M. Rankin	Democratic Substitute
Diane L. Butler	Republican Substitute (by telephone)
Michael S. Molinaro	Board Counsel

Staff:

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

Visitors: None

Absent: None

CALL TO ORDER AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Board President Donna Thewes called the meeting to order at 4:12 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 February 27, 2017 meeting were 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 made no changes to the minutes. President Thewes asked for a motion to accept the minutes. Ray Rankin motioned to accept the minutes as presented and Ann Balcerzak seconded the motion.

Action: The February 27, 2017 minutes were accepted as presented by those present.

ADDITIONS OR CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Board members made no changes or additions to the agenda. Director Guy Mickley informed the Board that his bi-annual performance review needed to be completed in the next few months.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to discuss.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Donna Thewes stated that there were scheduling conflicts with the Board meetings scheduled for October (the meeting currently falls on the same date as the SBE Biennial Conference) and December (Christmas Day). She asked if members wished to decide whether to reschedule or cancel these meetings at this time. After a brief discussion, President Thewes asked for a motion to delay a decision at this time and re-evaluate the need for these meetings in September. Ray Rankin made the motion, which was seconded by Diane Butler.

Action: The motion was passed by those present to defer a decision until September concerning rescheduling the Regular Open Board Meetings slated for October and December 2017.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

1. **Polling Place Reassignments and Fourth Early Voting Center** — Director Mickley informed the Board that discussion on the fourth Early Voting Center would be deferred until the April Board Meeting. Polling Place Reassignments will be reviewed at the May or June meeting. There is more administrative work to be done on each of these issues before they are presented to the Board. In addition, currently proposed legislation before the Maryland House and Senate, if passed, could have a significant impact on how we proceed on these issues. We are watching this closely.
2. **Continuing Items:**
 - a. **SBE Director's Meeting** — Director Mickley reported that the State Board of Elections held an in-person Director's meeting for the first time since the election. A number of issues were discussed, including using all BMDs for Early Voting. He expressed his dissent for this process for various reasons, as did a number of other counties. A decision has not yet been announced concerning whether or not this process will be used for Early Voting during the 2018 Gubernatorial Elections. If so, it would require additional equipment, more electric sources in our installations, changes to judge training and voter outreach and could significantly lengthen the time it would take for voters to vote. Board members asked several questions, including potential increased costs due to

more voting equipment and the need for additional warehouse space to store this equipment. He stated this would be the case, but we will wait to see the state's decision on using the BMD's.

- b. **Mock Election/Equipment Testing/Staff Training/Software Upgrades** — Director Mickley discussed a few other items of importance from the State's meeting, including a Mock Election in January 2018, a DS850 test in December 2017 and training for the staff, if we want it, on the equipment somewhere in the September/October timeframe. A new software release for all the equipment that we use in the elections (BMD, scanner and pollbooks) will have to be installed by our staff sometime this summer. He indicated that we will be participating in the Mock Election.
- c. **Voter Rolls Cleanup** — The Director indicated that the staff has been diligently cleaning up the voter rolls and just completed a 4000 name NCOA (National Change of Address) list. He stated that we will continue to ensure clean rolls for the voters of Howard County.
- d. **Candidacy Filings** — To date, three people have filed for candidacy here - one person for County Council 5, one person for the Democratic Central Committee and one for State's Attorney.
- e. **State Biennial Conference** — The State Biennial Conference is scheduled for October 23, 2017 (one day) at the DoubleTree Hotel in Annapolis. The Director indicated that a memo was provided to Board members by the Board Secretary.
- f. **Registration** — Director Mickley indicated that registration numbers continue to rise slowly. He believes this will continue to be the case until we have Universal Registration, which would have registrations coming from many agencies' websites as well as the MVA and the State Board.
- g. **Budget** — The budget book has been finalized to go to the County Council from the County Budget Office. Our budget has been reviewed by the Budget Office and County Executive, and no changes have been made to our budget request. Director Mickley is hopeful that this will continue to be the case through the County Council review. He stated that a date has not yet been set for the County Council to hear our request.
- h. **Warehouse Move** — Director Mickley reported that the County is continuing talks with the management and owners of the buildings adjacent to our office to determine where we can relocate our warehouse. There are several viable options, including one where both the warehouse and our main office would relocate. We are waiting to see which one pans out. The move needs to take place this year before we begin next year's election cycle. Several Board

members stated they would like to see the office and warehouse located together.

3. **Legislation** — An update on legislation has been provided to Board members in the MAEO newsletter handout. Director Mickley review the potential impact on us here at the local level:

- a. **HB 73 – Lowers the Age of Election Judges to 16** – This bill has passed the House and will probably pass the Senate. It is good for us, as it allows young registered voters to serve as judges even if they cannot yet vote.
- b. **HB 143 – Elections** – This bill includes a number of changes requested by the State Board to “clean up” election laws. It has passed the House.
- c. **HB 169/SB 91 – Streaming Live SBE Board Meetings** – This bill would require the State Board to live stream and archive their meetings. The bill was held.
- d. **SB 406 – Ballot Scanners** – This would require two scanners at each polling place. Director Mickley believes it will be considered for the Presidential Election in 2020, as there is not a need for this in 2018. In addition, our budget has already been submitted.
- e. **SB 64 – Allowing Party Changes for Unaffiliated Voters at Early Voting** – This bill has been withdrawn by the sponsor.
- f. **SB 960 – Requiring Reporting of Voting Results by Precinct** – This is still in committee.
- g. **HB – 345/SB 423 – Allows Same Day Registration on Election Day** – This is would be a Constitutional Amendment for the 2018 and is currently moving through the Senate. Director Mickley stated that this would have a huge fiscal impact on the office.
- h. **HB 619/SB 882 – Alters the Start Times for Posting Campaign Signs** – This bill lowers the start time for posting signs from 7:00 pm to 5:00 pm. It has passed the Senate, is moving through the House and is expected to pass.
- i. **HB 741/SB 938 – Automatic Voter Registration at Various Agencies** – This is still in committee in both houses.
- j. **SB 141 – Changes the Criteria for Polling Places on College Campuses** – This bill would not affect Howard County. It is still in committee.
- k. **SB 711 – Elections by Mail** – This is not expected to move forward.
- l. **HB 1299 – Howard County School Board Elections** – This bill would require the School Board to have five districts with one representative each that follow County Council lines. The bill has been amended to clarify that Board members will serve for four years; five would be elected in 2020 as Councilmanic representatives and two elected in 2022 as At-Large Board members. A transition period for current Board members would be established for purposes of continuity. The impact for us would be that it will probably require a two page ballot every other election, which means it could take voters longer to vote at the polls. This will impact our decisions regarding polling

place consolidations. Board members asked several questions, including which other counties have had two page ballots and if the second page of a ballot could be standardized to use for all ballot styles. Director Mickley indicated this would depend on each election's ballot requirements.

Donna Thewes then asked for a status report on the website update. Director Mickley stated that the 2016 election information has been removed and replaced by 2018 election information. Board members are now on the website. He stated that we cannot make changes to the county's website layout and must work within their requirements.

BOARD COUNSEL REPORT:

Board Counsel Michael Molinaro, Esq., indicated he had nothing to report.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

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 meeting at 4:56 p.m.

The next regular open meeting of the Howard County Board of Elections is scheduled for Monday, April 24, 2017 at 4:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Phyllis A. West, Board Secretary

Donna K. Thewes, Board President