

HOWARD COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

MEETING MINUTES

9770 Patuxent Woods Drive, Suite 200

Columbia, MD 21046

Monday, September 25, 2017 – 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 (excused tardiness)
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

Absent: None

CALL TO ORDER AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Board President Donna Thewes called the meeting to order at 4:20 pm with an established quorum present and welcomed members back after a summer break. She informed members that Ray Rankin would be late to the meeting. The Pledge of Allegiance was then given.

APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Draft copies of the minutes from the June 26, 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 present made no changes to the minutes. President Thewes asked for a motion to accept the minutes. Ann Balcerzak motioned to accept the minutes as presented and Diane Butler seconded the motion.

Action: The June 26, 2017 minutes were unanimously approved by those present.

ADDITIONS OR CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Board members made no changes or additions to the agenda.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to discuss. At this time, Ray Rankin arrived and joined the meeting.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Donna Thewes stated that she had nothing to report.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Guy Mickley updated the Board on the following issues:

1. **Candidates** – Several people have filed for candidacy in the office since the last Board meeting. A candidate has also withdrawn for County Executive. A list has been provided to Board members of those who have filed for office in districts that involve Howard County.
2. **SBE Biennial Conference** – The SBE Biennial Conference will be held on Monday, October 23, 2017 at the DoubleTree Hotel in Annapolis. All Board members and Board Counsel must attend by law. A copy of the draft agenda was provided to members. Donna Thewes indicated there didn't appear to be anything on the program specifically for Board members. Mr. Mickley said a joint program for Board members and staff was decided upon this year, and issues such as security measures, election knowledge and communications would be covered.
3. **Fourth Early Voting Center Status** – The Fourth Early Voting Center will be on the State Board of Elections' agenda for the month of October along with approval for two other Early Voting Centers from other counties. SBE could not vote on the issue in August as they did not have a quorum. Patrick Mullinix asked if the new site had been checked for WIFI coverage and rest room availability, and Guy Mickley indicated it had and there were no issues. Mr. Mullinix indicated information on voting could be placed on the potential new electronic sign facing Route 70 at the fairgrounds site.
4. **Positions** – Director Mickley reported that the office will begin interviewing for the three open positions in October prior to the next Board meeting. Donna Thewes asked if these were entry level positions and he confirmed this. Ann Balcerzak asked if these would be full time positions. Director Mickley indicated they would be, which will allow him to reduce the number of full-time temporary employees he will need in the future.
5. **Registration** – Registration numbers continue to rise slowly. The Director believes this will continue until we get into Universal Registration with registrations coming from many agencies' websites as well as the MVA and the State Board.
6. **Polling Places** – The staff is currently checking all schools that have been renovated to ensure that nothing has been changed that alters our polling place schematics. At one school, we learned that even though the gymnasium was updated, things also changed in the cafeteria. Had staff not gone out to survey, we never would have known this.
7. **Warehouse** – The warehouse continues to make sure everything is up to date for the upcoming election. All modems in the scanning units were removed by our staff and ES&S.

A series of tests were completed to ensure the scanners are working properly. A load test with folded ballots will be conducted on the DS850 in December.

8. **Training** – Many staff members have been through training provided by ES&S on the DS850, DS200 and BMD over the past few months.
9. **Summer Interns** – The League of Korean Americans ended up providing us with 17 volunteers over the span of one month, from June through July. The students did a wonderful job with the supplies for the upcoming election and portions of training videos for the office. The Board of Elections is by far the largest supporter of this program in the county. Director Mickley and Deputy Director Charlotte Davis received plaques from the organization thanking them for their support.
10. **Warehouse Move** – Director Mickley reported that activity on the warehouse move has ramped up considerably since the last Board meeting. Staff members from the office and the warehouse have been on over 10 site surveys and have narrowed down the new warehouse site to several locations within two miles of the office. This will make for easier management of the warehouse and less driving to and from locations when things are being moved. In addition, we will have more space which will allow us to move the storage items currently at the office and put them where they belong in the warehouse. The County Real Estate Division must have an agreement signed by October 13, 2017 to present it to the County Council at their December meeting. Donna Thewes asked several questions about additional space needs and if needed modifications would be able to be done. Director Mickley indicated that the county understands our space needs and that a few renovations would have to be made, including some offices at the warehouse location and a modified ramp at some locations. Ann Balcerzak asked how long the lease would be, and Guy Mickley indicated it was coordinated with our office lease, which will expire in 7 years. His goal would be to combine the office and warehouse in the future when new space will be leased.

Director Mickley indicated the county will get modified proposals from the three sites we have identified. He indicated he will have more on this at the next Board meeting, and would like to take the Board on a tour of the chosen facility in the future.

11. **Judge Training Videos** – Guy Mickley reported that the staff has completed the video editing for our training videos and the only thing left to do is the voice over. He expects the final products before the next Board meeting.
12. **Complaint** – We have heard nothing more on the complaint the State Board received from the Maryland Civil Rights Commission from a voter at a polling place on Election Day.
13. **SBE Information Security Steering Committee** – Guy Mickley was selected to be the LBE representative on the Information Security Steering Committee at the State Board of Elections. The committee will be reviewing both physical and information security in all aspects of elections. He will be disseminating information to the local boards from these meetings as well as providing local board expertise to the committee. Board members

asked several questions and he indicated that he could not discuss much at this time. He did say there was a broad spectrum of representatives from various organizations on the committee and he would be able to discuss some issues in the future.

14. Absentee Ballot Mailing Changes – Director Mickley discussed a huge change in the way we do absentee business which was discussed at the last Director’s meeting. We will now be mailing all of Howard County’s Absentee Ballots from this office for the 2018 Elections, as no vendors bid on the contract. In the past several elections, a file of absentee voters went to a third-party vendor that sent the ballots out through a mailing house. We will now be responsible for the full absentee mailing, including UOCAVA, which will generate more work for the Absentee Department. Staff is already planning ways to streamline the process. Director Mickley said he is not concerned as we have done this in-house before. However, there has been a 25% increase in Absentee Ballot requests since that time, and we will require additional staff resources to effectively handle the increased workload. The three additional positions we are adding will help provide more resources. Donna Thewes stated that she felt confident our staff could handle this, and that she felt past absentee mailings from the office were very well managed, with overseas voters receiving their ballots faster than through the State’s mailing house.

Donna Thewes then asked about Mr. Vaughn’s name still appearing on the Candidate List since he has passed away. Guy Mickley indicated that the State Board of Elections must remove a name, and he will have staff contact SBE to initiate this process and see what is required.

BOARD COUNSEL REPORT

Board Counsel Michael Molinaro indicated there was not much to report. He did review several news headlines from various states relating to voting security issues, which members then discussed. They also discussed other computer security breaches at major U.S. companies.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

Diane Butler recently took the training course and asked several general questions about the new Open Meetings Act requirements, which President Thewes answered.

Board Members discussed upcoming meeting dates in October and November. The October Board meeting date conflicts with the State Board of Elections Biennial Conference in Annapolis, at which Board attendance is mandatory. It was decided to cancel the October meeting unless there are issues to address. Board members also agreed that the November meeting should be moved up one week to November 20th due to the Thanksgiving holiday.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Action: The Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 5:14 pm.

The October Howard County Board of Elections Meeting has been cancelled so that Board members can attend a mandatory State Board of Elections Meeting in Annapolis, MD. The next regular open meeting of the Howard County Board of Elections has been scheduled for the third Monday in November -- Monday, November 20, 2017 at 4:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Phyllis A. West, Board Secretary

Donna K. Thewes, Board President