

HOWARD COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

MEETING MINUTES

9770 Patuxent Woods Drive, Suite 200
Columbia, MD 21046

Monday, September 24, 2018 – 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

Absent: None

Visitors: Eric Broussides, Esq.	
Wayne Robey	Clerk of the Circuit Court

CALL TO ORDER AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Board President Donna Thewes called the meeting to order at 4:02 pm with an established quorum present. The Pledge of Allegiance was then given.

SWEARING IN OF CANVASS BOARD

Wayne Robey, Howard County's Clerk of the Circuit Court, was asked to join the meeting.

Action: Mr. Robey proceeded to swear in members of the Board of Elections as Canvass Board members for the 2016 General Election. Members then signed the Oath of Office of the Board of Canvassers, after which Mr. Robey departed.

APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Draft copies of the minutes from the August 27, 2018 meeting were provided to Board members by electronic mail prior to the meeting and revised draft paper copies were distributed at the meeting. President Thewes asked for a motion to approve the August 27th minutes as presented in the paper copy. Ray Rankin motioned to approve these minutes and Diane Butler seconded the motion.

Action: The August 27, 2018 minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

ADDITIONS OR CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Board members made no additions or changes to the agenda.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to discuss.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Thewes had nothing to report and turned the meeting over to Director Guy Mickley.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

1. Continuing Items

- a. **General Office Update:** Director Guy Mickley reported that the staff has accomplished and will be working on several things as we gear up for the General Election. They are broken down as follows:

aa. Warehouse – All equipment in the warehouse is prepped and ready for Logic and Accuracy testing to take place next week starting with the BMDs and Scanners. Public L&A will be October 12, 2018 at 10:00 AM. Most supplies are packed and ready to be audited.

bb. Absentee – The Absentee Department has entered about 2250 records for the General Election as of today. This number is on par for this time frame for a Gubernatorial General Election. Charlotte Davis provided an updated number of 2267. Guy Mickley indicated that he expects a 55-60% voter turnout for this election.

Nursing Home and Assisted Living Program – Phyllis West reported on this program and stated that we have 90 facilities in Howard County which have been contacted to participate in the program. Fourteen are large facilities (over 50 residents) for which we offer visits by staff teams and 76 are small facilities which we handle by mail. At this time, we are scheduling seven absentee voting team visits to large facilities and handling five large facilities by mail at their request. Two large facilities have not yet responded. A number of small facilities are also participating in the program this election. We had 132 absentee voters from the Primary Election who chose to vote through the visiting program for the General Election. Based on current applications, we estimate about 200 voters will participate in our program for this Election.

Donna Thewes thanked Ms. West for the report and said that Phyllis West does a great job with this program and it is very well run.

cc. **Voter Outreach** – Dawn Sinclair and others have been tasked with visiting all the high schools throughout the county to garner voter registrations and recruit judges. We will be busy for National Voter Registration Day tomorrow, as we have four different functions to attend including the Library with the League of Women Voters. We will continue our voter outreach efforts until the close of registration. Mike Molinaro asked how many students are participating and Guy Mickley stated he won't know until the visits are complete. Students are told they can earn extra money for the holidays. Patrick Mullinix asked which high schools were being visited as he is presenting at two tomorrow and will be glad to bring up the issue. Charlotte Davis said she would get him that information. Mr. Mickley also stated that we would be visiting Howard Community College twice more.

dd. **Ballots** -- We received our ballots for the election today and the staff will begin preparations for packing the ballots this week. I hope to have all the ballots packed by the end of next week in conjunction with starting L&A testing.

ee. **Two Page Ballots** – For the first time ever, we will have a two-page ballot in Howard County. The second page contains one State question and a Howard County local question. We have been training the election judges to make sure that this new issue is handled correctly in the polling places and early voting. We have gone to great lengths in training class to disseminate as much information as possible on the topic. The judges are prepared for just about anything they may face from a voter dealing with the two-page ballot. These ballots will take longer to vote at the scanner. If a ballot is spoiled, the process will be different as well and judges have been trained on that. Board members discuss the potential issues and how they would be handled at the polling place by chief judges.

Ann Balcerzak then asked if anyone can come into the polling place (e.g. the press or the public) and ask to see the voter counts. Director Mickley stated that challengers and watchers may do this and the press is allowed to do so if the chief judge OK's it and calls the office. They will provide the number from the pollbook. Mike Molinaro then asked when sample ballots would be mailed. Mr. Mickley indicated it would probably be next week.

He then stated that voting information will be published in the Beacon, Howard County Times, Laurel Leader and Columbia Flyer the Thursday and Sunday before Early Voting, and the Sunday during Early Voting.

2. **Registration** – The Director reported that registration continues to be typical for a Gubernatorial General Election. We have seen a small uptick in voter correspondence in the past few months, which will probably be the continuing trend through the General Election. The MVA records throughout the state that were a problem during the Primary are still being cleaned up. They should be fully cleaned up within the next two weeks. We currently have 230,322 active and inactive voters. Mike Molinaro asked if this was an all-time high and Guy Mickley indicated that it was. Donna Thewes asked when the State will finalize evaluating the MVA issue. Mr. Mickley indicated it was almost complete. He stated that the problem was in the kiosk system, and the two systems were not interfacing

correctly. They discovered it was closer to 16,000 records that were affected, not the 80,000 first reported.

3. **Budget** – We are tracking well in FY19. We have not made any large expenditures besides a little more signage for the polling places through this date. We are working on the food for Early Voting and Election Day, and once again, Phyllis should be recognized for all her hard work in ensuring that no one goes hungry during the election.
4. **Petitions** – The Bread and Roses Party did not get enough signatures to become a recognized party in the State of Maryland. Donna Thewes asked if there were any other petition issues. Guy Mickley indicated he did not think so. Board members discussed potential issues for future petitions. Guy Mickley then stated that some of the newer schools in the county might be used for polling places in the future if there is redistricting.
5. **Write-In Candidates** – Guy Mickley reported that October 18th is the deadline for write -in candidates. We currently have three write-in candidates on the ballot, as listed below.

U.S. Senator for Maryland	Party
Puskar, Michael B.	Unaffiliated
Shlikas, Edward	Unaffiliated
Young, Lih	Democrat

6. **Judges** -- We have finished our regular refresher training and some of the new judge training for Check-In, Voting and Provisional Judges. The schedule has been condensed with concurrent classes, which worked very well and reduced the training time from 6-8 weeks to one month. We are training the Chief Judges this week and will have make-up classes for all judges and formal training during the open-house time frame to make sure everyone is trained before the election. We currently have 77 vacancies and 200 alternates available for assignment. Board members then discussed the Early Voting sites and their turnout during the Primary Election, with more expected during the General Election. Guy Mickley stated there had been water in the building we use at the Fairgrounds during the recent rains, and wanted the fairgrounds staff to do something such as sandbags up the walkway. Patrick Mullinix said he will talk to Mr. Turner at the fairgrounds about this.

BOARD COUNSEL REPORT

Mike Molinaro, Esq., stated that he had nothing substantive to report. He said members had already been introduced to Eric Brousaides from his firm, who would be available to the Election Director and Board while Mr. Molinaro is away in early October. They both represent many government agencies which have similar issues, such as the Open Meetings Act. He then reported that Nikki Charlson from the State Board of Elections will hold the first conference call on October 3rd, and he will be on the call. He said Board members and the Director should let him know if there are any issues they would like to have him discuss. Mr. Molinaro then reported that he had received an email last week from the PIA Ombudsman (a position created in 2015 in the Attorney General's office to facilitate responses). Emails also went to Gary Kuc and several attorneys for county agencies. The email was to make us aware of the mediation process if a dispute arises relating to the custody of records. Ann Balcerzak asked if this person

was for the State or Howard County? Mike Molinaro stated this person represented the State of Maryland and is there when help is needed.

He then reported on an article in the Washington Post last week where a judge in another state was considering an injunction to prevent the use of touch screen voting equipment in that state for this election. Ann Balcerzak stated that the machines had no paper backup and Mr. Molinaro stated that Maryland was ahead of other states in providing paper ballots.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

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 to approve several sets of Canvass Board Minutes. Ray Rankin made a motion to recess the meeting, which was seconded by Diane Butler.

Action: The Board unanimously voted to recess the Regular Open Board Meeting at 4:59 pm.

At the end of the Board of Canvassers Meeting, President Thewes reconvened the Regular Open Board Meeting at 5:09 pm and reported that three sets of Canvass Board Meeting Minutes had been approved and no ballots were presented. She then asked if there was anything else to discuss. There were no other issues presented.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Donna Thewes asked for a motion to adjourn the Regular Open Board Meeting. Ray Rankin made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Diane Butler seconded the motion.

Action: Board members unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 5:09 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Phyllis A. West, Board Secretary

Donna K. Thewes, Board President