

HOWARD COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

MEETING MINUTES

9770 Patuxent Woods Drive, Suite 200
Columbia, MD 21046

Monday, March 25, 2019 – 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: Charlotte B. Davis	Deputy Director
Phyllis A. West	Board Secretary

Absent: Guy C. Mickley	Director (excused)
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Visitors: Jay Gerarden

CALL TO ORDER AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Board President Donna Thewes called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm with an established quorum present. The Pledge of Allegiance was then given.

WELCOME GUESTS

Donna Thewes welcomed guest Jay Gerarden and asked if he wished to make any comments, which he did not.

APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES

A draft copy of the minutes from the February 25, 2019 meeting was provided to Board members by electronic mail prior to the meeting and a paper copy was distributed at the meeting. President Thewes asked for a motion to approve the February 25th minutes as presented. Patrick Mullinix motioned to approve the minutes and Ray Rankin seconded the motion.

Action: The February 25, 2019 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

Donna Thewes stated that the current Republican members of the Howard County Board of Elections have been reappointed for a four-year term starting June 3, 2019. Ann Balcerzak indicated that the Democratic Central Committee was working on the appointments and should be done shortly. Mike Molinaro stated that the Howard County Clerk of the Court should swear in the new Board. After discussion, Donna Thewes stated that the Board would be sworn in at the June meeting.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Deputy Director Charlotte Davis presented the report in the Director's absence.

1. Continuing Items

- a. General Office Update: Staff has accomplished and is working on several things as we close out the past election and gear up for the upcoming election. They are broken down as follows:
 - aa. Many of our committees have met and are doing some structuring within their committees and delving out responsibilities. The Voter Outreach Committee has met again and has started to come up with some new and innovative ideas to possibly use during future events. They voted on creating some voter outreach materials --magnets, pamphlets and judge flyers -- to enhance the Voter Outreach experience. The office visited the Youth Fair at Long Reach High School on Saturday, March 23rd to provide important voter outreach to the youth of Howard County. The Website and Social Media Committee has continued going through the website and making the appropriate changes on a weekly basis. The Judge Recruitment and Retention Committee has had their initial meeting and will be meeting with the Voter Outreach Committee to create a joint effort on how to recruit judges into the future. Charlotte Davis indicated that we would not begin recruiting judges until August 1st of this year.
 - bb. The Director had his budget meeting with the County Executive and key county personnel last week. Appreciation was given to the Board of Elections for their continued efforts to save the County money, and for running smooth elections in Howard County. The budget remained untouched from the initial submission except for money taken out by the Director because of pollbooks not being purchased. The Director provided a PowerPoint presentation with some interesting graphs that was also shared with the Board President. Board members discussed the pollbooks, potential software updates and using newer technologies in the future.

cc. The warehouse is still doing Post-Election Maintenance on the voting equipment and general clean-up of both voted and unvoted ballots. Ballots are days from being complete. All PEM is complete on all voting equipment except for our pool of contingency BMDs. Staff has encountered very few issues with the equipment throughout the process. Equipment that had issues has been fixed by the vendor. Most importantly, the State has decided to continue using the existing pollbook through the 2020 election, so no pollbooks will be bought for the upcoming election. The existing pollbooks will be receiving an upgrade for the upcoming election.

2. **Registration** – Voter registration continues to be typical for after a Gubernatorial General Election. We have seen a small uptick in voter correspondence in the new year, which will probably be the continuing trend through the Primary Election.

3. **Candidate Filing for 2020** – There is still nothing to report as far as candidates for the 2020 election cycle. We assume this will change slowly over the next few months.

4. **Legislation** -- The final tally was 101 bills filed in the General Assembly related to Elections. The bills that we talked about last meeting all still have the same disposition as we discussed, except for the following:

- a. HB79 -- Has been amended so that the County can choose whether or not to add an additional Early Voting Center. It has crossed over to the Senate in this form.
- b. HB172 -- This bill changes the voter registration deadline from 9:00 pm to 5:00 pm. It initially looked like the bill was dead, but it was resurrected and crossed over to the Senate.
- c. SB449/HB286 -- First iteration of the Same Day Registration on Election Day bill. We still don't have a lot of answers as to the "how it is done" portion, but both bills have been altered to be mirror images of each other, except for a single piece of "who" contacts potential voters that are not registered -- the State or the Local Board of Elections. We have no means of knowing who a "potential" voter is, so it is likely that the State will be the party that is tasked with this process. The Director will keep the Board abreast of the situation as it seems to be constantly changing.

Board Members discussed the status of the above bills and other pending legislation, and the short time left (just over two weeks) for the legislature to act on the legislation. They also discussed their support of having even more students involved in the election process as judges and interns.

Charlotte Davis reported that the Director will continue to update the Board throughout the next month as to changes and or amendments in Election Bills in the General Assembly. He will also notify the Board of any bills that we have not discussed that appear to be moving along despite other information.

BOARD COUNSEL REPORT

Michael Molinaro, Esq., stated that the State Board of Elections (SBE) had approved a Manual Audit of Ballots by each Local Board of Elections in October. On March 1st SBE published draft proposed regulations which have a 31-day comment period. Public observation is now allowed as part of this process. SBE performs an automated audit. Mr. Molinaro also noted that a Local

Board of Elections cannot certify a Primary Election until the manual audit is completed. He then handed out and discussed several new regulations relating to elections, including campaign finance and using on-line platforms for registration. Ray Rankin mentioned the proposed Election Page Program and Board members discussed it.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Donna Thewes reminded Board members that the April meeting date had been changed to April 15, 2019. She then 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 4:52 pm.

The next Regular Open Board Meeting of the Howard County Board of Elections is scheduled for Monday April 15, 2019 at 4:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Phyllis A. West, Board Secretary

Donna K. Thewes, Board President