

**HOWARD COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS MEETING MINUTES**

9770 Patuxent Woods Drive, Suite 200

Columbia, MD 21046

**Wednesday, August 26, 2020 – 4:00 pm**

**Note:** *This meeting was held by Conference Call due to the current COVID-19 pandemic and the Governor’s directives concerning limiting in-person gatherings & meetings.*

**Emergency Board Meeting**

**ATTENDEES:**

**Board Members:**

Donna K. Thewes	Board President, Republican Member
Ann M. Balcerzak	Vice President, Democratic Member
Diane L. Butler	Republican Member
Timothy J. Mummert	Republican Member
Raymond M. Rankin	Democratic Member

<b>Staff:</b> Michael S. Molinaro	Board Counsel
Guy Mickley	Director
Charlotte B. Davis	Deputy Director
Phyllis A. West	Board Secretary

**Absent:** None

<b>Guests:</b> Joel Hurewitz	Ken Stevens
Ginny Gick	

**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. Since members were in different locations without flags available, the Pledge of Allegiance was not given.

Donna Thewes stated that this meeting was called to discuss the potential of adding a fifth Early Voting site for the Presidential General Election in addition to the four approved at the August 24, 2020 meeting. Director Guy Mickley has additional information made available after the that meeting. She then turned the meeting over to the Director.

Guy Mickley stated that he had received a report from the Judge Department at the end of the Board Meeting on 8/24/20 that indicated there had been a larger number of judges who had signed up to work in the previous week than had been anticipated. Since he and the judge staff

has been on vacation last week, the staff finished the updated report late on Monday. With these new numbers, the Director believes we now have enough judges to support a fifth Early Voting location. We have approximately 2,200 judges who have indicated they will work during the election. The Director indicated we would need 35 judges each day for 8 days, for a total of 280 judges at the fifth Early Voting site.

He then stated that we have enough voting equipment to use at the site and believes there will be minimal impact on the staff. Guy Mickley suggested we use Wilde Lake High School for the fifth site if the Board approves it. He indicated that the Early Voting sites each have some voter overlap. However, adding this site does increase voter coverage by Early Voting Centers in the county from 92% to over 93% of voters living within 5 miles of a site. Guy Mickley said maps would be sent to Board members by the end of the week.

Donna Thewes asked each Board member if they had questions or comments. Ann Balcerzak and Tim Mummert indicated they had no questions. Ray Rankin stated that by adding a fifth location, it would help take the burden off of the other four Early Voting sites. Diane Butler asked Guy Mickley if there was anything in the Western Part of the County. He indicated that coverage for Early Voting Centers has been put in or near the largest population centers. Diane Butler stated that with the facts they had been given at the 8/24/20 meeting, she felt the Board needed to think about the budget and extra costs of opening a fifth center, plus the added stress on the staff to support a fifth center plus have enough time to process mail in voter applications as well as the ballots being returned. Donna Thewes stated she had no questions.

President Thewes asked for a motion concerning approving a fifth Early Voting Center at Wilde Lake High School. Ray Rankin made a motion to approve Wilde Lake High School at a fifth Early Voting Center and Tim Mummert seconded the motion.

**Action:** Donna Thewes, Ann Balcerzak, Ray Rankin and Tim Mummert voted in the affirmative to add a fifth voting center. Diane Butler voted against the motion. The motion passed by a majority vote of the members.

Ann Balcerzak thanked Guy Mickley for trying to expand the voting area and making access easier for voters. Ray Rankin agreed.

Guy Mickley then reported that as of Tuesday afternoon, 8/25/20, the office had received 37,500 mail in ballot applications, with 2,500 received in one day. He believes that mail in ballot voting will be highly used for this election. He also reported that he is adding staff to assist with mail in application processing.

Guest attendee Joel Hurewitz then asked several questions, which the Director answered. Board members also made several comments.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Donna Thewes asked for a motion to adjourn the Emergency Board Meeting. Ray Rankin made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Tim Mummert seconded the motion.

**Action:** Board members unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 4:24 pm.

The next Regular Open Board Meeting of the Howard County Board of Elections is scheduled for Monday, September 21 at 4:00 pm via teleconference. (***NOTE:*** This date was changed due to the Jewish holiday the following week.) Information will be provided on the Howard County Board of Elections website as to how the public can join this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

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Phyllis A. West, Board Secretary

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Donna K. Thewes, Board President