

**Howard County Citizens' Election Fund Commission  
3430 Courthouse Drive  
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043**

**OPEN MEETING MINUTES**

A duly advertised public meeting of the Howard County Citizens' Election Fund Commission was held on the 1st Floor, Columbia-Ellicott City Conference Room, George Howard Building, 3430 Courthouse Drive, Ellicott City, Maryland, 21043 and via Webex on June 3, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

**Commission Members ("Commission") Present:**

- Suzanne Geckle
- Douglas Miller
- Nadine Bernard
- Keith Ohlinger
- Ralph Frith

**Staff Members Present:**

- **Angela Moore**, Deputy Director, Department of Finance, designated to assist the Commission pursuant to Code Section 10.310 (h).
- **Brenna Punte-Pinos**, Assistant Director, Department of Finance
- **Kristen Perry**, Deputy County Solicitor, Howard County Office of Law
- **Amanda Mihill**, Senior Assistant County Solicitor, Howard County Office of Law
- **Rafiu Ighile**, Director, Department of Finance

**Special Guests:**

- Kevin Gillogly, Public Finance Program Manager, State Board of Elections (SBE)

As the Chair of the Commission, Ms. Geckle called the open meeting to order at approximately 6:01 p.m.

1. Administrative Items

- o Ms. Geckle stated that the minutes from December 3, 2024, had previously been approved by the Commission via email.
- o Commission members agreed that their next meeting will be held on September 16, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at the George Howard Building.

2. New State Board of Election Staff

The Commission was joined by Kevin Gillogly, Public Finance Program Manager, State Board of Elections (SBE)

- o Round table introductions were made by the Commission, County staff and Mr. Gillogly.

- Mr. Gillogly joined SBE in March of 2025, he previously ran a publicly financed campaign in Baltimore City and brings a vast amount of knowledge and experience to the SBE.
- Mr. Gillogly mentioned that the State of Maryland has three new counties participating in public financing programs.
- Mr. Miller discussed two items of concern with Mr. Gillogly and the commission:
  - Is the requirement for contributors to verify their address necessary?
    - The requirement to confirm address is necessary but does not require a separate form to be submitted. Voided checks from donations are not acceptable but address confirmation can be included on donor's form/receipt.
  - Is the provision regarding a candidate's ability to use the fund if participating in the general election but not the primary election fair?
    - The State can review and try to come up with something fair and equitable.
- Regarding the State MDCRIS system, Mr. Gillogly stated that the plan is to have the new system available for use in November 2025.
- Mr. Gillogly provided a walkthrough of the MDCRIS system to the Commission and County staff on how to view candidate information for those who have registered to run for office and those who plan to use public financing.

### 3. Citizens' Election Fund ("CEF") Balance

Ms. Geckle mentioned the current balance in the fund is \$2,875,792.64, which includes the approved FY26 budget appropriation, available after July 1, 2025.

### 4. Updating Summary Guide and FAQs

Prior to the meeting, Commission members sent Mrs. Moore suggested changes to the Summary Guide and FAQs based on legislative changes enacted by CB46-2024 as well as the dates for the current election cycle and other clarifying language. The Commission discussed and agreed to the suggested changes.

- All dates for the current election cycle and amount changes based on the CPI adjustment.
- Clarification in Section 12, page 15 of the Summary Guide, that the \$300 donation limit is from each family member that is not included in as an allowable donor of up to \$6,000.
- Clarification of wording regarding coordinated expenses in Section 42, page 30 of the Summary Guide.
- FAQ item #14, update date to return unspent funds and add language that allows candidate to keep up to \$5,000 for post-election expenses.
- FAQ item #41, update link to current election cycle timeline.
- FAQ item #43, remove language previously updated for the one-time extension of filing deadlines for the 2022 election cycle and add deadlines for 2026 election cycle.
- FAQs additional items #51, 52 and 53, regarding loans and uncontested election allowances.
- FAQs contact information for County staff and SBE staff.

5. Independent Expenditures:

The Commission discussed the interplay regarding independent expenditures and candidates who participate in the public financing program. The Commission discussed that the law is clear that participating candidates cannot coordinate expenditures with non-participating candidates. Mr. Gillogly explained that independent expenditures are allowed under State law if the authority line is not that of the candidate's campaign and cited a Supreme Court ruling indicating this as "free speech". Ms. Mihill agreed that if expenditure is allowed by the State, the County cannot contradict.

6. Adjournment:

Upon motion by Mr. Miller and seconded by Ms. Bernard, the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the open meeting at approximately 7:19 p.m.