

**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 Conference Room, George Howard Building, 3430 Courthouse Drive, Ellicott City, Maryland, 21043 and via Webex on September 16, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.

Commission Members ("Commission") Present:

- Suzanne Geckle
- Nadine Bernard
- Douglas Miller
- Ralph Frith
- Meagan Braganca
- Matt Dellinger
- Steven Wilson

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
- **Rafiu Ighile**, Director, Department of Finance
- **Lori Buchman**, Budget Analyst, Office of Budget

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

1. Administrative Items

- o Introductions were made by Commission members and County staff members. The Commission welcomes three new members, Meagan Braganca, Matt Dellinger and Steve Wilson.
- o Ms. Geckle provided a brief overview to the new members on the contribution matching model and mentioned that the CEF website has additional information including FAQs, Summary Guide, previous meeting minutes, etc.
- o Ms. Geckle stated that the minutes from June 6, 2025, had previously been approved by the Commission via email.
- o Commission members agreed that their next meeting will be held on December 2, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. via Webex.
- o Upon motion by Mr. Frith and seconded by Mr. Miller, the Commission unanimously re-elected Sue Geckle to continue to serve as Chair of the Commission.

- Upon motion by Mr. Miller and seconded by Mr. Frith, the Commission unanimously elected Nadine Bernard as the new Vice Chair.
2. Established CEF Committees

Ms. Geckle announced that as of September 16, 2025, there are eight candidates registered to run for County Council, one of which has been approved for public financing, and two candidates registered to run for County Executive.
 3. Citizens' Election Fund ("CEF") Balance

Ms. Geckle mentioned the current balance in the fund is \$2,877,530.
 4. FY27 Budget Request
 - Ms. Geckle estimates based on the current information from the State Board of Elections (SBE) on the total registered candidates, the fund will need at least \$2,490,620 for the upcoming 2026 Elections.
 - Ms. Moore provided information on the agreed cost sharing between SBE and the County for the salary of SBE's Public Finance Program Manager position and new system updates. SBE determined that based on Howard County's population and the County shall pay 9% of the salary. The total salary is allocated based on population to each County that offers public financing.
 - The Commission will determine a final FY27 budget request at the December 2nd meeting.
 5. CEF Training for Candidates:
 - The Commission agreed that an updated training video for candidates should be created and posted to the County's CEF website.
 - The old video will be sent to the Commission to review and plan for updates based on recent legislation.
 - Once SBE finalizes the upgrade of their system, the video will be finalized with updated information. The upgrade is tentatively scheduled for November 2025.
 - Ms. Geckle mentioned the monthly "Lunch & Learn" training sessions held virtually by SBE the Monday before the reports are due. Ms. Moore confirmed that the training schedule has been posted to the County's website.
 6. Adjournment:

Upon motion by Mr. Miller and seconded by Mr. Wilson, the Commission voted unanimously to adjourn the open meeting at approximately 6:47 p.m.