

**HOWARD COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS**

**MEETING MINUTES**

9770 Patuxent Woods Drive, Suite 200  
Columbia, MD 21046

**Monday, January 22, 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
Michael S. Molinaro	Board Counsel

**Staff:**

Guy C. Mickley	Director
Charlotte B. Davis	Deputy Director
Phyllis A. West	Board Secretary

**Absent:** Diane L. Butler                      Republican Substitute (excused)

**Visitors:** David Zinner

**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.

**WELCOME GUESTS**

President Thewes welcomed David Zinner to the meeting and asked if he would like to discuss any issues. Mr. Zinner said he had no items to discuss.

**APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

Draft copies of the minutes from the November 20, 2017 meeting were provided to Board members by electronic mail prior to the meeting and a paper copy was made available to each member present at the meeting. Members made no changes to the minutes. President Thewes asked for a motion to accept the minutes. Ray Rankin motioned to accept the minutes as presented and Patrick Mullinix seconded the motion.

**Action:** The November 20, 2017 minutes were unanimously approved by those in attendance.

### **ADDITIONS OR CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

Board members made no changes or additions to the agenda.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence to discuss.

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

1. **Meeting with State Senator Gail Bates** – President Donna Thewes reported on a meeting she and Director Guy Mickley had with State Senator Gail Bates at the Senator's request. Senator Bates is a member of the Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee which is responsible for overseeing Maryland Election Law. Ms. Thewes reported that Senator Bates was interested in learning more about election processes, responsibilities and roles of SBE and LBE's. She also wanted to get a clearer understanding of the rules and regulations and how they impact voters. She asked several questions and Guy Mickley provided information on process issues, procedures and roles. President Thewes indicated she was pleased that a legislator has reached out to us to learn more about election processes, LBE responsibilities and our needs.
2. **2018 Board Meeting Schedule** – Donna Thewes reviewed the tentative 2018 Board Meeting schedule each member had received and discussed the conflicts with holidays and swearing in of the Canvass Boards for the Primary and General Elections. It was confirmed that the Board Secretary would contact the Clerk of the Court to schedule swearing in at the May 21, 2018 and September 24, 2018 meetings prior to the elections. Ms. Thewes then recommended that the Board accept the following changes to the 2018 regular meeting schedule as noted on the draft schedule:
  - Change the May 28<sup>th</sup> date to May 21<sup>st</sup> due to the Memorial Day holiday,
  - Cancel the regular June 25<sup>th</sup> and November 26<sup>th</sup> meetings since other required Board meetings will be held in conjunction with Election Day during those months, and
  - Change the December meeting to December 12, 2018.

All other regular meeting dates on the fourth Monday of the month would remain the same. Ms. Thewes asked for a motion to approve the 2018 Board Meeting Schedule with the above changes. She stated that this schedule could be changed later should the need arise. Patrick Mullinix moved to approve the revised meeting schedule and Ray Rankin seconded the motion.

**Action:** The 2018 Howard County Board of Elections Board Meeting schedule was approved as revised by those present.

3. **Ethics Report** – Donna Thewes indicated she had received a reminder notice concerning filing of the Financial Disclosure Report, which some other members also received. She reminded Board members to file their reports.

## DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Guy Mickley reported on the following issues as we gear up for the election:

### 1. Continuing Items

General Office Update:

**aa. Equipment and Supplies Status** – Mr. Mickley reported that pollbooks, scanners and the BMDs have been charged per the State charging schedule and everything has been packed into carts for the pending warehouse move. All supplies and accessories that go to the individual polling places have also already been packed.

**bb. Pollbook Software Upgrades** – Software on the pollbooks will have to be upgraded prior to the Primary election, but the schedule for the upgrade has not been disseminated to us as of this date. It is driven by the change to the Early Voting process, since there is no longer a requirement for proof of residency during Early Voting.

**cc. Absentee Ballots** – The Absentee Department has entered 206 records into the system as of today.

**dd. Voter Outreach** – We have a very aggressive Voter Outreach schedule with the school system in all the High Schools in Howard County. Staff has been registering voters, taking names for those who wish to serve as election judges and answering general questions. Each high school will be visited multiple times. To date, we have processed 115 registrations and recruited 77 election judges.

**ee. Ballot Stubs** – Several counties proposed having the ballot stubs removed from the ballots this election and just having 50 ballots shrink-wrapped per pack. The State Board reviewed the two different methods and concluded that having stubs, at least through the 2018 elections, made sense. The Director supported keeping the ballot stubs due to chain of custody concerns and attended the State Board meeting to speak on the issue if needed. It appears no changes will be made for now. Board members and Mr. Zinner asked questions about the perforations and could they be improved? Mr. Mickley said this was possible.

**ff. Best Practices** – We have continued discussions with surrounding counties concerning best practices and have implemented some of their ideas and “tweaked” some of our verbiage in judge materials for the upcoming election. We continue to become more streamlined and make improvements in our processes. Howard County has a robust judge system and several counties have taken our ideas and materials and used them.

Donna Thewes asked for confirmation of judge salaries for the 2018 Election. Mr. Mickley reported that Chief Judges will receive \$250/day, Regular Judges \$195/day, Greeter Judges \$175/day, Early Voting (EV) Judges \$190/day and a new category of EV technical judges will receive \$140 or 145/day. Training pay will now be \$50 for chief judges, \$40 for technical judges and \$35 for all other judges. Ann Balcerzak asked if LBE's determined the judges pay rate and Mr. Mickley confirmed this.

1. **Registration** – The Director reported that registration continues to be typical for a Gubernatorial Primary election. There has been a small uptick in voter correspondence

in the new year as compared to the last several months of 2017. Board members have been given a 2017 review of statistics which provides a picture of registration in Howard County.

2. **Budget** – Guy Mickley provided information on the FY2018 budget status to date and the FY2019 budget submission for the upcoming fiscal year. He said the office is tracking well this year, with approximately 75% of our remaining budget due to be used in June for the election. The requested budget for next year is higher due to the purchase of new pollbooks estimated at approximately \$500,000 for Howard County, and a 12% raise for all non-management state employees. Other higher amounts in the budget are driven by the County as chargebacks for services that all county agencies use and split the costs. Donna Thewes asked if we could shop around for better prices on the pollbooks. Director Mickley indicated that SBE will negotiate a price with ES&S, but we can't do it separately. She asked when the current lease expires and he stated we are in the first two-year extension of the original agreement and several more extensions are available to us. Mr. Mickley indicated that MAEO is currently working on the salary increases for state staff members mentioned above. President Thewes asked if the proposed salary increases include contingent staff (who are county employees). The Director indicated they do not.
3. **Candidates** – We have had many people come in to register for candidacy over the past 60 days. A full list of all candidates that will appear on Howard County ballots is available for your review. Candidate filing closes on February 27, 2018 at 9:00 pm. Mike Molinaro asked if this list was on the website. Mr. Mickley indicated it was on the State Board website.
4. **Judges** – The Judge Department has been very busy. Two emails have been sent to sign up potential election judges and as of this date, 941 people have responded. The Judge Department is assigning respondents to precincts as they received their information. There are now 728 judges assigned in the system. The staff has also been assigning judges for the Early Voting cycle and currently all positions EV-03 have been assigned. The Director reported that Bill West and Jeff White have developed a new judge database which will allow him to provide the Board with a new monthly report on judge status. Handouts have been provided showing this information and the judge training schedule for the Primary Election. If Board members wish to take training classes, they should let him know.
5. **Warehouse Move Status** – The new warehouse is now slated to be complete by March 1, 2018. The permit to start the work is done and there has been some work done to remove walls and flooring and on the HVAC system. No build-out had started as of his visit there last week. Mr. Mickley has been in constant contact with the builders from the rental company and County IT to establish where we need phone and computer lines dropped. The State IT division will install a T-1 line for MDVoters. The Director will be meeting with the County security specialists this week to determine where the contacts and motion detectors should be placed in the new area. The State's moving company contract will allow the State to move anything that is directly related to the voting system. The County (Board of Elections) will be responsible for the balance. After discussion, the Board agreed to meet at the new warehouse site prior to the

February Board meeting for a brief walk-through if the facility was ready for their tour. The Board Secretary will send information and a reminder notice prior to the next meeting.

6. **Democratic Central Committee Ballot Change** – The Director reported that the Democratic Central Committee in Howard County will now be voted on by gender. This is to have a gender-balanced Central Committee. Howard County will still have 20 members on the Central Committee -- 10 males and 10 females. This means we will have two races instead of one, which will lengthen the ballot slightly. A copy of the letter to the State from the Democratic State Central Committee is in your handouts.
7. **MAEO Conference** – The MAEO Conference will be held from March 13-16, 2018 at the Clarion Resort in Ocean City. Currently on the agenda there is a breakout session for attorneys on both Wednesday and Thursday, and a breakout session for board members on Thursday only. The agenda appears to be election-related this time. Guy Mickley is on the agenda as part of a panel to talk about the DHS Risk and Vulnerability Assessments. The Board discussed session topics planned, questions for the canvassing session, logistics and other details. President Thewes would like to see more advanced educational programs on the MAEO agenda for Board members, and asked Director Mickley to write a letter to MAEO concerning this.
8. **Pre-Primary Training Program (PPTP)**– Guy Mickley reported that the PPTP was held statewide last week. This involved using all pieces of equipment from Early Voting all the way through the canvass, just like we would in the election. Pollbooks, scanners, BMDs, the high-speed ballot scanner (DS850), ballot on demand printer and any other peripheral equipment was used and tested during the four (4) day process. We did encounter some small issues throughout the four-day event, but nothing that would be considered a showstopper. All in all, he felt that the training test was a success statewide. He plans to do an in-house test with a local focus sometime in February.

Donna Thewes mentioned the Board's role during election night, and the Director indicated that after the May Board meeting members would receive training on their role as closers.

#### **BOARD COUNSEL REPORT**

Mike Molinaro, Esq., stated that he had no legal issues to report. He mentioned his concerns with the compact time schedule before the Primary election and asked if any legislation being considered is anticipated to generate interest in a petition. Guy Mickley stated no one has come in and asked about petitions to date.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

President Thewes asked for a motion to recess the Regular Open Board Meeting so that the Board could meet in Executive Session according the Open Meetings Act General Provisions. This was to discuss a personnel matter. Ray Rankin offered the motion, which was seconded by Patrick Mullinix.

**Action:** Board members present unanimously voted to recess the meeting at 5:08 pm.

President Donna Thewes reconvened the Regular Open Board Meeting at 6:30 pm after the Executive Session. She reported that the semi-annual performance review of the Director was completed during the session.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Donna Thewes asked for a motion to adjourn the Regular Open Board Meeting. Patrick Mullinix offered the motion, which was seconded by Ray Rankin.

**Action:** Board members in attendance unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 6:31 pm.

The next Regular Open Board Meeting of the Howard County Board of Elections is scheduled for Monday, February 26, 2018 at 4:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Phyllis A. West, Board Secretary

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Donna K. Thewes, Board President