

**HOWARD COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS**

**MEETING MINUTES**

9770 Patuxent Woods Drive, Suite 200  
Columbia, MD 21046

**Monday, March 26, 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
Diane L. Butler	Republican Substitute
Michael S. Molinaro	Board Counsel

<b>Staff:</b> Charlotte B. Davis	Deputy Director
Phyllis A. West	Board Secretary

<b>Absent:</b> Guy C. Mickley	Director (Attending Conference)
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**Visitors:** David Zinner

**CALL TO ORDER AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM**

Board President Donna Thewes called the meeting to order at 4:03 pm with an established quorum present. The Pledge of Allegiance was then given.

**WELCOME GUESTS**

David Zinner discussed a recent news article which said that seven state systems were compromised and asked if Maryland was one of them. President Thewes indicated that Maryland was targeted but not compromised. She indicated that the State Board and Local Election Boards are working with the Department of Homeland Security to ensure the integrity of our elections. Mr. Zinner said judges want to help with this effort and since they are out in the community can be additional “eyes and ears”. The Board indicated these issues will be addressed in judge training classes.

Mr. Zinner then asked several administrative questions and suggested as he had at a previous meeting that service pins be given to judges with service longevity as a token of appreciation. He also asked if chief judges could be issued special name badges or buttons to make them more visible. Deputy Director Charlotte Davis reported that the pins for judges had been

researched, but due to budget constraints was not pursued. Board members discussed these issues and thought they might have merit. They will be discussed with the Director.

### **APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

Draft copies of the minutes from the February 26, 2018 meeting were provided to Board members by electronic mail prior to the meeting and a paper copy was distributed at the meeting. Board Counsel suggested one spelling correction to a name. President Thewes asked for a motion to accept the minutes as corrected. Diane Butler motioned to accept the minutes as corrected and Ray Rankin seconded the motion.

**Action:** The February 26, 2018 minutes were unanimously approved as corrected.

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

Board members made no additions to the agenda. President Thewes did state that in the Director's absence, Deputy Director Charlotte Davis would present the Directors Report, which would be done prior to the President's Report.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence to discuss.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Deputy Director Charlotte Davis reported on the following issues:

1. **Warehouse Move** – The warehouse move has been completed and equipment has been setup and organized. Pollbooks are done and 20 additional Pollbooks have been received. Twenty additional printers should arrive in the next two weeks. Warehouse staff is charging equipment and will be setting up for L&A. Board member are welcome to come for a tour on any business day or we can schedule a tour before the next Board meeting. Donna Thewes stated that a tour will be planned at 3:30 pm on Monday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> prior to the next Board meeting.
2. **General Office Update:** We have accomplished and will be working on several things as we gear up for the election:
  - a. **Absentee Ballots:** We have processed 289 ballots to date for the Primary Election, which is very low.
  - b. **Office Overhaul** - Once the warehouse move was complete; several staff members were relocated within the main office.
  - c. **DHS Training** - On Wednesday, March 28th at 10 AM, DHS will lead an Active Shooter Training Session in our training room for the staff. Board members are welcome to attend. Please let Phyllis West know if you will be joining us. Baltimore County staff has been invited to participate.
  - d. **Cybersecurity Training Event** – As mentioned last month, Guy Mickley is presently on his way to represent the State of Maryland as the local board representative to Harvard University's Belter Center Election Cybersecurity and Training Event on March 16-18, 2018 in Cambridge, MA.

3. **Registration** – Voter registration continues to be very light.
4. **Budget** – No cuts to our proposed budget were made during the second round of Howard County’s budget review. Director Mickley will be meeting with the Howard County Council on May 4, 2018. Ann Balcerzak mentioned that she would like to have the Director revisit having coffee available for staff members.
5. **Judges** – Judge training starts next Monday, April 2, 2018. Provisional training has been moved up in the training schedule to the second week of April and will run concurrently with Voting Judge training. Judge staff continues to recruit for the few vacancies remaining as well as to build a pool of alternate judges. Judge training videos are currently being uploaded and will be available for reference when judge training begins. Board members are looking forward to viewing the videos.
6. **Candidates** – Candidate filing has been completed and all candidate proofing has been finished. This week we will begin to proof the ballots.
7. **Proposed Legislation** – You have received a handout for the proposed Senate Bill 333, which is the original version without amendments that MAEO supported. This is now the version being considered. Board members discussed the potential impact of these changes if adopted.

#### **PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

President Thewes indicated that the report would consist of Board members summarizing the MAEO Breakout Sessions they attended at the recent MAEO Conference.

- Ms. Thewes began by reviewing the ***All Things Absentee and Nursing Home Program Session***. She stated Howard County is already doing a good job with this program. She commended Board Secretary Phyllis West for being well prepared, organized and effectively managing these processes and issues to ensure the program runs smoothly. SBE did suggest not leaving ballots with the voters if they don’t vote them during a visit. Ann Balcerzak stated that anyone helping a voter if a ballot is left at the voter’s request must complete a voter assistance form. Donna Thewes then reviewed and Board members discussed the issue of Court Ordered Guardianship which was discussed at the session. Board Secretary Phyllis West mentioned that SBE had recently sent an article clarifying this issue. Board members asked that a copy be forwarded to them, which was subsequently done. Guest David Zinner stated that judges might be able to help with the nursing home voting process.
- Donna Thewes also briefly discussed Polling Place Emergency Preparedness and the many resources now available to LBE’s from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).
- Diane Butler attended the ***Innovative Election Judge Recruitment Session***. Montgomery County has a robust program which operates year-round with a large budget to support their outreach and judge recruiting efforts. They begin recruiting student volunteers in middle school and give them awards based on hours of community service contributed. The County sends letters of expectation to students reviewing the rules of participation and the parents must sign a permission form. Donna Thewes said they have an outreach program for minorities and some student “election ambassadors” serve as translators. Board members discussed other aspects of

their program and what Howard County is doing regarding voter outreach and student judge recruitment. Charlotte Davis stated that after the Primary Election we will review the number of young people recruited as judges vs. those who worked the election. Some students can only work the Primary Election since they will leave for college in the fall. Board members suggested that Dawn Sinclair should do a report at the next Board meeting as to Howard County's Outreach Program this year. Guest David Zinner asked what tasks young people were assigned and thought they should be rotated to all tasks/positions.

- Ray Rankin summarized the **Information Technology Roundtable Session**, stating that testing would be done soon; there are new modems for Early Voting sites and the new Pollbooks tested in two counties will not be used for this election. Diane Butler asked if tablets could be used and Mr. Rankin stated no, that one issue would be USB ports in tablets vs. CF cards in pollbooks.
- The **2018 Legislative Update Session** was attended by Ann Balcerzak and Diane Butler. They reported that the key issues covered have already been discussed previously at this meeting.
- Donna Thewes and Mike Molinaro attended the **Board and Attorney Breakout – Canvass Procedure Review and the Definition of a Vote Session**. Both felt it was an excellent session and was effective in covering several canvass issues as well as when votes should or should not be counted. They provided several examples covered in the session and stated that when a voter's intent is clear, we can often accept their vote if there are no other issues with their ballot. She also stated that cybersecurity issues were discussed at the end of the session. Mike Molinaro asked the Board Secretary to bring copies of the *Definition of a Vote* document to the Canvasses. Donna Thewes told Board members that it is not their job to speak to the media; Director Guy Mickley handles those issues.

Ms. Thewes also mentioned that she had been in contact with Nikki Charlson at SBE concerning the Canvass Minutes template and asked if it could be made more user friendly (e.g. auto-populating information that is repeated in each set of Canvass minutes once it is completed the first time). Ms. Charlson indicated she will work on simplifying the template.

- Ray Rankin briefly reported on the **Post-Election Audits – From A to Z, Everything You Need to Know Session**. He summarized the session and stated that in the future, if LBE's find an error on their report soon after it is sent to SBE and send them a corrected report, the LBE will no longer be given an audit finding since the LBE made the correction.
- **Same Day Registration – What's New, Best Practices and Helpful Hints** was attended by Ann Balcerzak and Ray Rankin. Both said it was not a successful presentation-- equipment was not working in the first session and the presentation was too detailed for the audience. Donna Thewes stated that there is no longer a requirement for proof of residency when making an address change at the polling place.

**BOARD COUNSEL REPORT**

Mike Molinaro, Esq., stated that when the legislative session ends in April, the State Board will begin working on changes to COMAR, a process which usually takes about 6-8 months. However, some proposed legislation, if passed, could take effect prior to the Primary and/or General Elections this year.

**OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Board Secretary Phyllis West informed the Board that in addition to CPR Training, which has already been given to staff members, Howard County Government is now offering “Stop the Bleed” and Opioid Overdose Prevention (Narcan) Training to Howard County employees. She mentioned that she had taken the Opioid Overdose Training when it was offered a few years ago. These courses are being considered for BOE staff. Board members were supportive of having the staff trained in these areas. Guest David Zinner asked if judges could be included in this training and Board members discussed the issue. Ann Balcerzak asked that the Director to explore the possibility of providing training to Chief Judges.

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

**Action:** Board members in attendance unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 5:40 pm.

The next Regular Open Board Meeting of the Howard County Board of Elections is scheduled for Monday, April 23, 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