

## HOWARD COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS MEETING MINUTES

9770 Patuxent Woods Drive, Suite 200  
Columbia, MD 21046

**Monday, June 27, 2022**

**Note:** *This meeting was held Virtually.*

### Regular Open 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> Eric C. Brousaides, Esq.	Board Counsel
Guy C. Mickley	Election Director
Phyllis A. West	Board Secretary

<b>Absent:</b> Charlotte B. Davis	Deputy Director (Excused)
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**Guests:** Jay Gerarden  
Joel Hurewitz

#### CALL TO ORDER AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Board President Donna Thewes called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm with an established quorum present.

#### WELCOME GUESTS

Donna Thewes welcomed guests and said they would have the opportunity to make comments and ask any questions at the end of the meeting.

#### APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES

A copy of the draft minutes for the May 23, 2022 Regular Open Board Meeting was provided to Board members by electronic mail for their review prior to the meeting. President Thewes asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Ray Rankin motioned to approve the minutes of the May 23, 2022 Board meeting and Tim Mummert seconded the motion.

**Action:** Minutes of the May 23, 2022 Regular Open Board Meeting were unanimously approved as presented.

**ADDITIONS OR CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

Board members made no additions or changes to the agenda.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Donna Thewes discussed the letter sent to the Board by the Republican Women of Charles County. After discussion, the Board agreed we should acknowledge their letter. Donna Thewes will respond on behalf of the Board.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Donna Thewes said that since she was in Australia and had nothing to report, she would turn the meeting over to Guy Mickley.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Guy Mickley reviewed the Early Voting dates and times as well as canvass start times. He said if anything is needed from the Board, he will contact Ann Balcerzak during the first days of Early Voting while Donna Thewes is returning from her trip.

**General Office Update:**

The Director also discussed what has been accomplished and what staff will be working on in the office and the warehouse as we are gearing up for the 2022 elections, which includes:

**1. Voter Registration/Office Work –**

The Director reported that registration numbers are stable and picking up in pace. He indicated this will continue for the rest of this year. The staff is keeping up with the voter registration daily work and then going back and verifying the work that has been done. The State sent Mail-in Ballot applications to anyone who had changed their address as well as those who are listed as Unaffiliated or Other, and this has generated a small surge in the workload. Staff sent out Voter Notification Cards to all registered voters in the county, some of those have been returned. The staff is currently taking action on these as prescribed by state law.

**2. Warehouse –** Guy Mickley reported that the warehouse has been working on a multitude of projects that are impacted by associated functions, which include:

- a. *Logic and Accuracy Testing:* All scanners and BMDs went through Logic and Accuracy testing. The BMDs are tested to ensure that all ballots can be read by the voter and that they can select and print their selections at the end. We then ensure that the BMD ballots are read by the scanner. The scanner goes through a rigorous test of a deck of ballots in which we have the expected results, we add the BMD ballot results, and the final results for each Early Voting Center or Polling Place are compared to the tapes from the scanners to ensure accuracy. Our machines count correctly.
- b. *Transfer Carts:* The Black Transfer Carts, which house the scanners, BMDs, booths, ADA tables and a litany of other equipment, are already packed, audited and sealed for Election Day. The Early Voting Carts have other items to be added, but the carts that contain the BMDs, scanners and booths are packed, audited and sealed.

- c. *Supplies*: Judge supplies are packed and are currently being audited before finalizing them for the election.
  - d. *Schematics*: All polling place and Early Voting Center schematics are done and will be posted to the Google Classroom for the Chief Judges to peruse as we get close to the election.
  - e. *Ballots*: All ballots for the election have been received and are already packed into each polling place and Early Voting Center cart to be shipped.
  - f. *Polling Place Evaluations Forms*: All of the paperwork for these evaluations has been printed. Staff will be performing the evaluations throughout the voting process on a random, unannounced basis.
3. **Election Judges** – The Director reported that the judge department is dealing with an influx of judges quitting, with most doing so because they realize the new election date does not fit their schedule. Staff is filling the vacancies as quickly as possible. We could potentially have some polling places that are missing a check-in or voting judge, but since we typically over-allocate our resources in the polling places, combined with an anticipated low turnout, we will still be able to serve our voters at the normal, high Howard County standards.
  4. **Judge Training** – Judge training was completed on Saturday, including Chief and Tech Judge in-person training and Open House training for all other election judges. We had a great turnout for Open House, at times filling every table and piece of equipment for judges that wanted more hands-on training. Our Live Question and Answer sessions for all judges, held the previous week, were a resounding success. Most of the sessions turned into full training sessions rather than just Q and A sessions, which we had anticipated. We had video cameras set up to conduct “live” trainings.
  5. **Judge Manual** – Judges’ Manuals have been mailed to all Howard County judges at this point. The staff will continue to mail the manual to new judges. The new judges will be able to take the on-line training module before working on Election Day.
  6. **Vote by Mail (Mail-in Voting)** – Guy Mickley reported there are currently 28,758 voters scheduled to receive a ballot by mail for the Primary Election, and 18,791 of those voters are permanent mail-in voters, meaning that they will always receive a ballot for an election in the mail. We have received back 2,605 ballots as of this morning. We still expect to receive around 30,000 or a little more Mail-in Ballots for this election, which would be roughly 63% of the entire 2018 Primary Election turnout.
  7. **Budget** – Guy Mickley reported that he had provided Board members with a tracking sheet for the budget, and that we continue to track well for the budget year.
  8. **Early Voting Centers** – The Early Voting Centers will be set up during the day on July 6, 2022. The staff will be at each site for open and close, as well as several times throughout each day to check on the sites throughout the process.

9. **Drop Boxes** – Our drop boxes are up and running across Howard County. We are checking the drop boxes once a day until July 12<sup>th</sup>, when we will begin checking them twice daily. The Director reminded the board that the drop boxes are under 24/7 video surveillance, are locked and tamper taped. We fill out forms for chain of custody each time we pick up ballots.
10. **Sample Ballots** – The sample ballots are being mailed this week to registered voters in Howard County. They will include the voter’s polling place, a facsimile of the ballot, information on Early Voting and general information on how to vote in Howard County.

Donna Thewes told the Director if there was anything he needed from the Board, just let them know.

### **BOARD COUNSEL REPORT**

Eric Brousaides, Esq., stated that SBE has held one of the three planned conference calls with LBE Counsels, which was basically a review of the bills passed in the general assembly. The second call is scheduled for tomorrow.

### **GUEST COMMENTS**

Guest Jay Gerarden asked if the Election night results will reflect only the Early Voting and Election Day votes. Guy Mickley answered yes, that Early Voting results are released only after the polling places close. And once the polls close and precinct results come in, those votes are added to the totals. All Mail-in Ballot and Provisional Ballots are counted in the three days of the Canvass, and those results are reported on completion of each day of the canvass. Mr. Gerarden asked if there was a total count of the Mail-in Ballots. The Director said no, since we can receive Mail-in Ballots until 10:00 am on the last day of the Canvass (July 29, 2022) as long as they are date stamped by the Post Office by 8:00 pm on Election Day --July 19, 2022 (10 days after the Election).

Mr. Gerarden then asked if there was an estimate of how many votes would be by Mail-in Ballot, and Guy Mickley estimated approximately 50% or more. Mr. Gerarden then said he appreciated all of the work the Board of Elections and staff are doing for this election.

Joel Hurewitz discussed several website and administrative issues, several of which Guy Mickley indicated we don’t control and would be handled by the Howard County (website) or the State Board.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Donna Thewes mentioned the monthly statistics for the past few months are not yet posted. Guy Mickley will have staff get those posted.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Phyllis West, Board Secretary, stated that she was holding on preparing canvass agendas, scripts and minutes templates for our county until closer to the election, since the State Board often has updated templates closer to the Election. Donna Thewes concurred.

Ann Balcerzak and Tim Mummert will be sworn in as members of the Canvass Board on June 30, 2022 at the Clerk of the Court's office since they were not available to do so in person at the May meeting.

Donna Thewes and Board members stated that Guy Mickley and the staff have done an amazing job in putting the election together this year under challenging circumstances including redistricting, and they are very appreciative of everyone's efforts.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Donna Thewes asked for a motion to adjourn the Regular Open Board Meeting. Ray Rankin made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Diane Butler seconded the motion.

**Action:** Board members unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 4:48 pm.

The next Special Open Board Meeting of the Howard County Board of Elections will be held at approximate 8:00 pm on Gubernatorial Primary Election Night, July 19, 2022. The next Regular Open Board Meeting of the Howard County Board of Elections will be held on Monday, August 22, 2022 at 4:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Phyllis A. West, Board Secretary

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Donna K. Thewes, Board President