

HOWARD COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

MEETING MINUTES

9770 Patuxent Woods Drive, Suite 200
Columbia, MD 21046

Monday, March 21, 2016 – 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

Staff:

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

Visitors: Wayne Robey

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. The Pledge of Allegiance was then given.

SWEARING IN OF CANVASS BOARD

Wayne Robey, Howard County's Clerk of the Circuit Court, was asked to join the meeting.

Action: At 4:03 pm, Mr. Robey proceeded to swear in members of the Board of Elections as Canvass Board members for the 2016 Primary Election. Members then signed the Oath of Office of the Board of Canvassers, after which Mr. Robey departed.

APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES

A draft copy of the minutes from the February 22, 2016 meeting was provided to Board members by electronic mail prior to the meeting and a paper copy was made available for each at the meeting. Members had no changes to the minutes. Patrick Mullinix motioned to accept the minutes as presented and Diane Butler seconded the motion.

Action: The minutes were unanimously accepted as presented.

ADDITIONS OR CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Board members offered no additions or changes to the agenda.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to discuss.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Donna Thewes indicated that since the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board would fall on Monday, April 25th, the day before the Primary Election, she recommended not meeting on that date. All Board members concurred. The next Special Open Meeting of the Board of Elections will take place on **Primary Election Day, April 26th** in the evening after the polls close between 8:00 pm and 9:00 pm, once all Board members are available. The sole purpose of the meeting will be to select six precincts to be audited post-election per COMAR requirements.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT (see attached)

Guy Mickley provided Board members with a copy of his Director's Report and the March Monthly Statistical Report. He then provided updates on the issues identified in his report. Board members had some further discussion as follows:

- **NVSR Project** – Guy Mickley confirmed information provided at the February Board meeting that on each day of Early Voting and on Election Day every polling site will have a minimum of two voters voting on each BMD, including voters with visual impairments.
- **Warehouse** -- He updated the Board on the work at the warehouse, with L&A testing beginning tomorrow, March 22. Public L&A will take place on April 8, 2016 from 10:00 am – 12:00 Noon. Board members are welcome to attend, although it is not required.
- **Voter Outreach**—Events will continue on a limited basis through the end of March due to staff workload.
- **Voter statistics** – There has been little change. Donna Thewes asked what date regular voter registration closes. Mr. Mickley stated that the state's registration closing date is 9:00 pm on Tuesday, April 5th. However, new registrations and other changes can now be made during Early Voting via the new Same Day Registration process.
- **Judges** – Guy Mickley indicated that we are short three judges but have an alternate judge pool of 15, which will allow us to fill these slots. Judge training is finished except for open houses and "catch all" classes for those who missed regular training. He mentioned that Board members who have not yet attended a class may wish to attend a Chief Judge session during Open House to get a current overview the responsibilities of all judge positions. Supply pickup for judges will be on Sunday, April 24th between 9:00 am and 2:00 pm (or until we are done).

President Thewes stated that the staff had done a phenomenal job with judge training, and the format was more interactive this year. Mr. Mickley stated that SBE attended each type of judge training class, and had stated that Howard County "set the bar".

- **Bulk Update** -- Mr. Mickley indicated that the bulk update to poll books will be done on Friday, April 22nd and into Saturday, April 23rd if necessary. He is hoping to complete it by Friday night so that staff members can have a day off prior to the election, since all have been working many long hours. He said that Board members who would like to help with that process are welcome (members Ann Balcerzak and Ray Rankin have assisted in the past). All Board members indicated there were interested in participating in this process.
- **Budget** – Director Mickley informed Board members that he and Deputy Director Charlotte Davis had recently met with County Executive Kittleman to review next year's budget request. The meeting went well and no additional budget cuts were recommended. Guy Mickley has requested that the Budget meeting with the County Council, scheduled for May 6th, be rescheduled to May 9 due to the Second Absentee Canvass on that date. Donna Thewes asked if she needed to attend that meeting. Mr. Mickley indicated that she did not.
- **Absentee Voting** – We currently have nearly 2,000 absentee ballot applications, which is slightly higher than earlier projections. First mailings for overseas and domestic voters have been sent and Nursing Home visits will take place once we have the ballots, a date which is as yet undetermined. The Director stated that this was a difficulty for the Absentee Staff, as scheduled Nursing Home visits have had to be rescheduled on a tentative basis, all depending on when the ballots will be available.

Ann Balcerzak asked what the last date would be to request a mailed absentee ballot. He stated it is one week prior to the election, which is on Tuesday, April 19th.

- **Sample Ballots** – These should be mailed to voters next week. We are using the same vendor who has printed them in the past two elections and they are familiar with this process.
- **Ads for Early Voting** – The director indicated that ads will be placed in the same local and regional publications used during past elections.
- **Rovers** – There will be eighteen technical rovers in the field this election to assist at polling places, an increase of three over 2014. For the General Election, the director plans to have 20 rovers available.

Ann Balcerzak asked if the League of Women Voters (LWV) would be participating in this Primary Election. Director Mickley indicated that they would continue to check every polling place this election, even though the law has changed and only 10% are required to be checked. All Early Voting sites must be checked for three days by law. He believes this additional monitoring will be beneficial due to the new voting system being used for the first time, and costs are minimal (\$30 per site). LWV members will attend site training at the office this Thursday, March 24, 2016. Donna Thewes concurred that she feels that their feedback is valuable and this is worth doing. The Board agreed.

BOARD COUNSEL REPORT:

Mike Molinaro, Esq., indicated there was little to report. He will be participating on conference calls with SBE and LBE attorney's starting Wednesday, March 23rd with two additional calls scheduled prior to the election. He asked Board members and staff to let him know if there

were any questions they would like him to bring up. He also told Director Mickley that he would inform the Director of the call details if he would like to participate on these calls.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

Board members agreed to visit and monitor the following sites during Early Voting:

The Bain Center – Ann Balcerzak and Diane Butler
Miller Branch Library – Patrick Mullinix and Ray Rankin
Ridgely's Run Community Center – Donna Thewes

Diane Butler asked what she should do at the sites, since this is her first election as a Board member. President Thewes suggested she stagger her visits at different times and visit the site for approximately one-half hour each time. Since there is one other Board member at her site, they should split their visits -- four days for each Board member at the site. She asked Board Counsel Mike Molinaro if he could also visit some polling places on Election Day. He indicated he would visit some in the western part of the county.

Ray Rankin asked if opening and closing of polling places would be faster this year. Director Mickley indicated possibly not, since ballots must be counted at each site.

President Thewes told Board members that they should keep their cell phones on during polling hours in case there was a need to contact them.

Board Secretary Phyllis West then reviewed meal plans for staff and Board members on Election Day and informed the Board of the continued generous support of local businesses. Donna Thewes concurred. Ms. West will send further details to Board members via email.

Ms. West also informed Board members that they were currently using the new pens that voters would be using in the polling places. Director Mickley indicated he was able to get the pens at a very low price and that the vendor will work with us for other elections.

Mike Molinaro asked if any Election Judges on Election Day are high school students, and if so, will they be 18 by Election Day? Director Mickley indicated there is currently one student who is a judge who will be 18 by the election.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, President Thewes asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Patrick Mullinix offered the motion, which was seconded by Ray Rankin.

Action: The Board unanimously voted to adjourn the Board meeting at 4:47 pm.

The next Special Open Meeting of the Howard County Board of Elections is scheduled for Tuesday, April 26th at approximately 9:00 pm on Primary Election Day.

Respectfully Submitted,

Phyllis A. West, Board Secretary

Donna K. Thewes, Board President

Director's Report- March 21, 2016

1. NVSR Project-

- i. Change in Use of BMDs- The State has asked us to get at least two voters in every polling place to vote on the BMD in the morning, and after that anyone that requests to use it or any visually impaired voter will use it. This goes for both Early Voting and Election Day. There will only be one BMD at all early voting centers and polling places. There is a lawsuit against the State Board by a candidate involving the BMD, but further details have not been provided.
- ii. The warehouse staff has packed the carts with everything that they can up until this point, and will be starting L&A testing tomorrow. The public L&A, which is now just the viewing of documents from L&A by request, will be on April 8, 2016 from 10 AM to 12 PM. The Board is more than welcome to attend, but with no parallel test with the new system, I do not see the necessity.
- iii. Voter Outreach- The office continues to conduct voter outreach events throughout the county. For the month of March, we have a limited schedule due to staff is no longer able to leave and do functions with everything going on in the office. The folks that were hired to do voter outreach are the only people going out, and they will continue to go out 1-2 times a week through March. No one will be doing voter outreach in April.

2. Voter statistics- these statistics encompass the month of March to date. Not a lot of movement for a Presidential election.
3. Judges- As of right now, we only need 3 judges, but we have 15 judges on our alternate list, and the list grows every day . We are done with most all of our training classes. This week we have "Catch-All" classes, which simply encompass all the judges who did not train up until this point in the process. We have Open House also, which the calendar has been provided to you in the handouts for this meeting. Judge pickup for supplies will be April 24 from 9AM to 2 PM.
4. Budget- Charlotte and I met with the County Executive who understands our needs and made no cuts to the budget that I submitted for the office. Our work session with the County Council is scheduled for May 6, which is also the second AB canvas and certification of the election, so I have already asked for another date. It will more than likely be May 9.
5. Absentee- We currently list 1966 voters that have applied for an Absentee ballot for the Primary Election. This is actually a little higher than anticipated. The first round of domestic ballots and email ballots has already been sent out to the voters. We will be able to go through with the Nursing Home project voting as soon as we receive ballots here in the office. Unfortunately, that date is a moving target. We have been told somewhere between March 28 and April 7 for the ballots.
6. Sample Ballot- The sample ballot was bid on and the vendor already has the proofs to us for approval. I expect to send the first round of sample ballots out to 98% of our voters next week.
7. Advertising for Early Voting- We have decided to advertise in the same papers we did the past several elections for early voting, as it seems to work. They are the Baltimore Sun papers (Sun, Laurel Leader, Howard County Times, Columbia Flier), and the Beacon.

8. Rover Districts- Rover districts for election day have been completed and for this election we will have 18 technical rovers out in the field to assist the judges with issues and other troubleshooting. For the general the number will grow to 20. Most rover districts have gotten smaller due to the increase in rovers from 15 last election.