

HOWARD COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

MEETING MINUTES

9770 Patuxent Woods Drive, Suite 200
Columbia, MD 21046

Monday, July 25, 2016 – 4:00 pm

Regular Open Board Meeting

ATTENDEES

Board Members:

Donna K. Thewes	Board President, Republican Member
Ann M. Balcerzak (by phone)	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: 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 and President Thewes welcomed guest David Zinner to the meeting.

APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES

A draft copy of the minutes from the May 23, 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. Diane Butler motioned to accept the minutes as presented and Ray Rankin seconded the motion.

Action: The minutes were unanimously accepted as presented.

GUEST COMMENTS TO THE BOARD

David Zinner asked questions concerning the Board audit done after the Primary Election. Director Guy Mickley explained the State Board of Election procedures for conducting the audit. Mr. Zinner discussed the BOE website and offered suggestions to clarify acronyms and add information to the election calendar, which the Director indicated could be done. Mr. Zinner

then asked for an update on the ballot perforation issue. Guy Mickley indicated that it should be resolved for the General Election and provided a technical description about types of ballot perforations. There was also discussion about the small size of the circles used to vote for candidates on the ballot. Based on voter feedback, magnifiers were not widely requested or used by voters at the polls.

Finally, Mr. Zinner asked if the Board or State had had any complaints concerning voter fraud, and the answer was no. Director Mickley indicated the state goes a long way to prevent this. For example, Maryland has joined with multiple other states to share voter data lists to ensure corrections and updates are made to voter rolls (ERIC Reports), the state provides potential duplicate voter reports which are fully researched, and other methods are used as well. Donna Thewes thanked Mr. Zinner for his input.

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 she hoped everyone had learned something new at the Annual MAEO Conference in June and she was happy that everyone returned home safely since there was severe weather in the area for those departing Tuesday evening.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT (see attached)

Guy Mickley provided Board members with a copy of his Director's Report and the July Monthly Statistical Report. He then reviewed changes underway to office processes and new equipment ordered for the upcoming November General Election:

- ***Provisional Voting Table Relocation*** – The Provisional Voting table is being moved adjacent or close to the check-in tables at each polling place to ensure no provisional ballots are taken to the ballot scanner. Chief Judges will still escort the voter to the Provisional table from the check-in tables.
- ***More Rovers*** – The Director indicated he will now have 20 Rovers in the field on Election Day with each having fewer polling places to manage. He has a map of Rover area assignments if Board members would like to review.
- ***Elimination of Regional Centers*** – Approximately 30 Rovers, staff and Board members (“Closers”) will pick up sticks from the scanners and cards from the poll books at each polling place on Election night after the polls close. Judges will close poll books and scanners immediately upon closing. Closers can also help answer some judge questions regarding closing the polls. Mr. Mickley believes that with this change, Closers can have critical election data back to the office no later than 9:30 pm on Election night. With Board members and staff assisting in collecting this information at the polls, Walter

Maddox will be able to return to the office sooner and begin downloading the data more quickly.

Mike Molinaro asked how this would impact the Board's required public meeting on Election night. Guy Mickley said that the meeting could be held sometime after 9:00 pm, whenever Board members have all returned to the office from the polling places. Several Board members commented that they will be very happy to assist with this process.

- **“How to” Packing Pictures in Carts** – In addition to a closing and packing instructional guide, this addition will provide a simple “at a glance” way for judges to see how the materials should be re-packed and what should be in the carts before locking them up.
- **Additional Equipment** -- Eleven scanners have been added, with two assigned to each polling place which has the potential of high voter turnout. One hundred and forty-four additional voting booths are being added to help reduce lines along with one additional judge at each polling place. Early Voting sites will have five more voting booths, two additional poll books and three more judges at each site. There are also twelve new transfer carts. The bottom line is we are trying to avoid voter lines.
- **Post-Election Maintenance and LoKA Volunteers** -- Poll book PEM is finished and most supplies are packed thanks to the efforts of staff and our nine summer volunteers from LoKA. Guy Mickley stated that they worked very hard, did a wonderful job and we are very happy with the results. Roy Smith took them under his wing and managed their assignments during their time at the office. LoKA will hold an awards ceremony at the Bain Center on August 20th for the many student volunteers involved in this program from all over the county. Charlotte Davis and Roy Smith, their supervisors, have been invited to attend and will present certificates of appreciation to each student who worked here. Director Mickley said he is also giving the students a pizza party lunch on their last day this Wednesday. President Thewes stated that since this program was so successful, she will send a thank you letter to the Program Director on behalf of the Board of Directors.
- Warehouse staff has finished PEM on scanners and BMD's, and is now adding the new equipment mentioned above to each precinct. Ray Rankin asked if problems with scanners during the Primary had been resolved. President Thewes asked if ES&S can replace these. The Director indicated that SBE and ES&S are replacing those few with problems.
- **Judges** – Judge training starts August 15th and Phyllis West mentioned that each Board member has a copy of the August training schedule in their packet. The Director stated letters are going out to each category of judges being trained and so far assignments are going well. The September calendar will be available shortly.
- **Election Night Reporting** – Director Mickley stated that we will have an in-house backup system ready in our office on election night and will not need county assistance except for providing real-time access to our website for updating results. We plan to test this in the

near future and he will report the results in more detail to the Board at the September meeting. SBE and ES&S have also been doing testing to ensure smooth operations for the General Election.

- **Polling Place Changes** – At their request, the St. Augustine School will no longer be a polling place after this election. Jeff White will be looking into options for relocating the polling place after the November election. Director Mickley indicated he might want to look into “Super Polling Places” – with 5-6 precincts together – in 2017 when future planning starts.
- **Voter Statistics** – Due to the six week delay in re-opening voter registration (rather than two) because of the late Primary Election certification, there was a large backlog of voter registrations to be processed. The staff has now caught up with this backlog.
- **Budget** – Director Mickley told the Board that he returned \$600,000 to the County in unused funds from the BOE budget for the last fiscal year. We are now in the FY17 budget year with minimal expenses to date.
- **Absentee Voters for General Election** – We currently have about 4,000 absentee ballots for the November General Election. We should get 8,000-9,000 and believe the absentee ballot numbers will be much lower than in the past due to Early Voting.
- **Absentee Ballots from Primary Election** – The Director stated that three more Absentee Ballots have been received. They will be presented later at the Board of Canvasser’s meeting for processing.
- **Howard County Fair** – President Thewes asked the Director if he needed help from the Board to work the BOE booth at the Fair. He indicated that two staff members will be working all hours the booth is open and Board members are welcome to supplement the staff. The Board Secretary will send via email the planned work schedule for the Fair. President Thewes asked Board members to review their schedules and let the staff know if and when they will be available to work at the Fair.

BOARD COUNSEL REPORT

Mike Molinaro, Esq., indicated there was nothing to report. President Thewes stated that he had done an excellent job at the MAEO Conference as part of the LBE Attorney’s panel discussion on petitions and legal election issues.

Mr. Molinaro then asked if there would be any ballot questions on the November ballot since the August 12th deadline for submitting questions was quickly approaching. The Director indicated that nothing official had yet been submitted, but he has heard that there was a possibility of both county and state questions. The Director stated that Maryland’s Attorney General will write any state questions.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business. Donna Thewes stated that as of this time there would be no August meeting unless something comes up to warrant one. All Board members agreed to cancel the August Meeting.

BOARD OF CANVASSERS MEETING

Donna Thewes asked for a motion to recess the Regular Open Board Meeting so that the Board of Canvassers Meeting could be convened to address several Absentee Ballot issues. Diane Butler made a motion to recess the meeting, which was seconded by Ray Rankin.

Action: The Board unanimously voted to recess the Regular Open Board Meeting at 4:42 pm.

At the conclusion of the Board of Canvassers Meeting, President Thewes reconvened the Regular Open Board Meeting at 4:48 pm.

There was a brief discussion about polling place issues. The Director indicated there would be signage and access improvements made at certain polling places (e.g. locking certain doors that should not be used) to improve voter flow and access.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

With no other issues to discuss, President Thewes requested that a motion be made to close the Regular Open Board Meeting at 4:54 pm so that the Board could meet in Executive Session according to the Open Meetings Act §10-508(a). This was to discuss renewal of the Board Counsel's contract and other personnel matters. Diane Butler made a motion to recess the meeting, which was seconded by Ray Rankin.

Action: The Board unanimously voted to recess the Regular Open Board Meeting at 4:49 pm so that the Board could convene in Executive Session.

At the conclusion of the Executive Session, President Thewes reconvened the Regular Open Board Meeting at 6:06 pm. She reported the Board Counsel's contract has been approved and renewed for two years and the semi-annual review of the Director was completed during the Executive Session.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Action: The Board unanimously voted to adjourn the Regular Open Board Meeting at 6:07 pm.

The next Regular Open Board Meeting of the Howard County Board of Elections is scheduled for Monday, September 26, 2016 at 4:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Phyllis A. West, Board Secretary

Donna K. Thewes, Board President