

HOWARD COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

MEETING MINUTES

9770 Patuxent Woods Drive, Suite 200
Columbia, MD 21046

Monday, September 26, 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: Diana M. Liebno

CALL TO ORDER AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Board President Donna Thewes called the meeting to order at 4:01 pm with an established quorum present. The Pledge of Allegiance was then given.

SWEARING IN OF CANVASS BOARD

Diana M. Liebno, Howard County's Chief Deputy Clerk of the Circuit Court, was asked to join the meeting. She indicated she was substituting for Wayne Robey, Clerk of the Circuit Court, who was unable to attend the meeting today and extended his apologies.

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

APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES

A draft copy of the minutes from the July 25, 2016 meeting was provided to Board members by electronic mail prior to the meeting and a paper copy was made available to each member 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.

ADDITIONS OR CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Board members offered no additions or changes to the agenda.

CORRESPONDENCE

There were two items of correspondence discussed and copies were provided to Board members. Directory Guy Mickley first summarized the letter from Gary W. Kuc, Howard County Solicitor from the Office of Law, which certified to the Board that two questions will be placed on the ballot for the November General Election. (Question A - Charter Amendment, Citizens' Election Fund System and Question B – Changes to Budgetary and Fiscal Procedures.) Director Mickley indicated these were Howard County Charter questions.

The second letter was from the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO). Mr. Mickley indicated that Howard County, at the request of the State Board of Elections, has been chosen to participate again in the GAO's study of voting access for people with disabilities during the 2016 General Election. This is the second time in the past eight years Howard County has been chosen to participate out of 20,000 counties in the United States. Director Mickley indicated he will escort the GAO team to selected polling places if requested, but based on past practices, they usually want to make these visits on their own. Donna Thewes asked if he will be advising Chief Judges at the polling places of the potential visits. He indicated this information will be provided in the final information notes to the Chief Judges. Donna Thewes and Diane Butler asked that he let Board members know if their assistance was needed. He indicated he would have the Board Secretary advise them if there was a need for their help.

Director Mickley then reviewed the local news publications in which election information regarding Early Voting sites and dates has been published.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Donna Thewes indicated she had nothing to report.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Guy Mickley provided Board members with a copy of his Director's Report, the July Monthly Statistical Report, a "Closers" list of individuals and Precinct assignments for each, and a Chief Judges Step by Step Electronic Voting Equipment Closing Guide. He then reported on the following:

The Director discussed the closers list of assignments and indicated that Board members would be assigned to Precincts close to the Election Office to allow for their return to the office by 9:00 pm so that they can hold the Board meeting on Election Night. The Step by Step guide will provide information to those who have not been through the process before at the polling places. This started as a reference for Board members only, but was changed to provide information to the Chief Judges as well in a simple format. He offered a training class to Board

members who are interested after the October 24th Board meeting. Donna Thewes and Ann Balcerzak indicated they would be interested in a class.

In addition to the above, Director Mickley reported on the following:

1. NVSR Project- Pre-Election

- i. Several key items have either been implemented or finished since our last meeting.
 - a. Pollbook upgrades have been completed and pollbooks are ready for Logic and Accuracy testing ahead of the election.
 - b. Rover and closer assignments have been made and a document to assist in the closing of the polling place has been created. A brief training class will be scheduled to assist people who are not rovers in understanding the responsibilities for closing on election night.
 - c. The warehouse is ready to go for Logic and Accuracy testing of the scanners and BMDs and this process will commence this week. We have our public Logic and Accuracy testing scheduled for October 14, 2016 at 10 AM at the warehouse and will need a board member in attendance.
 - d. The warehouse staff has all equipment in the correct cart and all pictures for closing have been placed in each individual cart.
 - e. Ballots should be arriving to the office within the next 10 days.
- ii. Judges' trainings are about 90% complete and the judges' have given us positive feedback all the way through the process. We still have some make-up classes and a few Chief Judge training's to go through this week. Any additional judges that need to be trained prior to the election will be trained during the open house segment the week of October 17.
- iii. Judge assignments are in good shape throughout the county. We currently have three voting judges, one provisional judge, and two chief judge openings, but we have alternates already trained for these positions to step in and fill the voids. After assigning these six people, we are left with six additional alternate judges to fill any other voids that arise, and are still recruiting for additional alternate judges. He indicated he wanted to have 50-100 alternates trained and ready to substitute for those judges who cancel and reported that he has added a voting judge to each polling place in case of heavy traffic flow.
- iv. Election Night Reporting- The County has given us rights to post automatic updates to the website in the event that the State website has a malfunction on election night. We would simply post PDFs to the website to allow folks to view the unofficial results. Ann Balcerzak asked which staff members would post the results. Walter Maddox, Val Patterson and Guy Mickley will handle this.
- v. Trucking- We have a meeting scheduled with the trucking company next Monday to ensure that we are all on the same page for the deliveries to the polling places for

the election. We will have one more truckload of carts to run due to the addition of 12 carts going out to the polling places. We prepare the trucking routes as this is more efficient for this office.

- vi. All voters that check in to a polling place will be read the phrase, "If needed, there is an accessible way to read and mark your ballot." This happened at the last special board meeting of the State Board of Elections to allow people to know that the BMD is there and is available to be used by any voter. I do not expect this to cause additional lines...possibly just some random questions from voters which our judges will handle. Training for our judges started immediately. Board members discussed how to answer voter questions on this statement if asked. Guy Mickley indicated it will be in their last minute instructions.
 - vii. Great news! The Wednesday provisional canvass can now include absentee ballots! We have to advertise the canvass as such, and I will be sending out this information to the appropriate parties to ensure that everyone knows that this is how we will conduct that Provisional/Absentee canvass. This will allow us to count absentee ballots on Wednesday, and not have to be here all day on the Friday of the AB2 count!
2. Voter statistics- These statistics encompass the month of September to date. The office has noticed that the workload has been increasing steadily, but is nothing like 2008. We do notice a spike in workload when Social Media, like Facebook posts banners for registering to vote on their pages. The State, on Friday into Saturday, received over 10,000 electronic registrations because of this process by Facebook. Mr. Molinaro asked what the regular registration deadline was and Mr. Mickley indicated 9:00 pm on Tuesday, October 18th. Voters will be able to do Same Day Registration during Early Voting October 27th through November 3rd.
 3. Absentee Voters- So far, we have right around 6000 absentee ballot applications for the general election. The first military and overseas run and the first run of domestic voters has been completed. The first domestic mailing of ballots occurs this Thursday. About half of the ballots are now email ballots.
 4. The sample ballot proofs have been completed. The company is starting to print the shells this week and already has the file of most all of our voters. I expect that the sample ballots will start being mailed as early as late next week. There are seven ballot styles and thirty-two state certified write-in candidates for President as of this date.
 5. Budget- We are in FY17 now, and have spent very minimal money out of this budget cycle. Most money has been spent on additional supplies for the polling places. Staff and Board members have received Green Howard County Board of Elections shirts which will be worn during most Early Voting Days and on Election Day.

6. Absentee Ballots- Late Arrivals- There are absentee ballots from the Primary Election that arrived to the office past the deadline that the Board of Canvassers must convene and vote on.

Mr. Mickley reminded the members of the required Board meeting on Election Night which was mentioned above. Donna Thewes indicated it would be after 9:00 pm when everyone has returned from their assignments. Members will need to pick Polling Places in the Districts they as assigned below to be audited:

District 1 – Diane Butler
 District 2 – Patrick Mullinix
 Districts 3 & 6 – Donna Thewes
 District 4 – Ann Balcerzak
 District 5 – Ray Rankin

BOARD COUNSEL REPORT

Mike Molinaro, Esq., indicated there was nothing substantive to report. He stated that the State Board of Elections will once again hold bi-weekly telephone conference calls with LBE attorney's starting on October 5th. He asked Board members and Director Mickley to let him know if there were any questions they would like him to bring up.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

There was discussion on whether or not an October Board meeting was needed since that week will be the start of Early Voting. A decision was made to hold a brief meeting, after which there will be a training class for Board members to review their closing duties on election night.

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 4:53 pm.

At the conclusion of the Board of Canvassers Meeting, President Thewes reconvened the Regular Open Board Meeting at 5:09 pm.

President Thewes reported that during the Board of Canvassers meeting five late Absentee Ballots had been rejected as untimely.

Board members then discussed some issues of concern. Donna Thewes expressed concern about the timeliness of receiving ballots and the chain of custody of FPCA ballots. Diane Butler asked several questions and voiced concerns about the verification of citizenship for

voters. Ann Balcerzak suggested that if a Board member wanted to send something in writing to the State Board of Elections voicing their concerns, they could send this to the Board Secretary to forward. Director Mickley stated that there is a robust system of checks and balances to verify this information and voters whose information does not verify with MVA or SSA are placed into pending status.

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 5:14 pm.

The next Regular Open Board Meeting of the Howard County Board of Elections is scheduled for Monday, October 24, 2016 at 4:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Phyllis A. West, Board Secretary

Donna K. Thewes, Board President