

HOWARD COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

MEETING MINUTES

9770 Patuxent Woods Drive, Suite 200
Columbia, MD 21046

Monday, January 23, 2017 – 4:00 am

Regular Open Board Meeting

ATTENDEES:

Board Members:

Donna K. Thewes	Board President, Republican Member
Ann M. Balcerzak	Vice President, Democratic Member (by telephone)
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: Joel Hurewitz

Absent: None

CALL TO ORDER AND DECLARATION OF QUORUM

Board President Donna Thewes called the meeting to order at 3:58 pm with an established quorum present. The Pledge of Allegiance was then given.

APPROVAL OF BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Draft copies of the minutes from the December 14, 2016 meeting were provided to Board members by electronic mail prior to the meeting and a paper copy was made available for each at the meeting. Members made no changes to the minutes. President Thewes asked for a motion to accept the minutes. Patrick Mullinix motioned to accept the minutes as presented and Diane Butler seconded the motion.

Action: The December minutes were unanimously accepted as presented.

ADDITIONS OR CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Donna Thewes indicated there were no additions to the agenda, but due to scheduling issues for staff she asked for a motion to recess the Board meeting so that the Board of Canvassers Meeting could be convened to address several Absentee Ballot issues. Patrick Mullinix made a motion to recess the meeting, which was seconded by Ray Rankin.

Action: The Board unanimously voted to recess the Board meeting at 4:00 p.m.

At the conclusion of the Board of Canvassers Meeting, President Thewes reconvened the Board meeting at 4:22 p.m.

She reported that five Absentee Ballots received too late for the election had been rejected during the Board of Canvassers meeting. She stated that draft minutes from the first Post Certification Canvass Board Meeting would be presented for final approval at the next meeting of the Canvass Board on February 27, 2017.

WELCOME GUESTS

President Thewes welcomed Joel Hurewitz to the meeting and invited him to address the Board. Mr. Hurewitz discussed several issues including timely absentee ballots acceptance notification, redistricting and redrawing of maps, polling place relocation and his concerns regarding candidacy filing deadlines. Director Mickley explained the State Board of Elections timeline for notification of absentee ballot status, and said he would ask the state if they could provide additional information on their website as to these deadlines. The President and Director explained the legislature's responsibilities in the redistricting process, and Director Mickley said we will be redrawing the maps as soon as possible once the information becomes available to us. He stated that we would be addressing polling place issues as part of the polling place evaluation process which begins in several months. Mr. Mickley then indicated he would email the County Council regarding candidate filing deadlines.

CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to discuss.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Donna Thewes reported that the deadline for Board members to file their Financial Disclosure Reports is April 30, 2017. She asked the Board Secretary to provide members with the state web link for this report.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Early Voting Centers -- Guy Mickley reported that a fourth Early Voting Center will be required by law for the 2018 election and thereafter, and we have begun trying to locate a place to hold early voting. He will be presenting our findings to the board at a meeting in the next few months for board approval. We have not found a place as of this date. Board members discussed options in various areas of the county and how this would impact existing Early

Voting sites. Director Mickley stated that the new location must comply with legislative guidelines, and that he will be looking at a variety of options.

Upcoming Projects -- The Director stated that we will be in the midst of several projects over the next few months and he will be providing updates as we move forward. These projects include polling place consolidations, polling place realignment and affirmation of streets within district/precinct boundaries. Board members agreed that polling place consolidations were a good idea. Guy Mickley indicated that he hopes to present a tentative plan to the Board in late spring.

UOCAVA -- For future elections, UOCAVA voters will now be handled at the local level (handout provided) rather than centralized at SBE. There are a number of new rules and regulations that we must meet in processing these voters. This will result in an increased workload in the absentee department. Coupled with a fourth Early Voting Center and the advent of universal registration, the Director has included a request for three additional full time state positions in the budget submission.

Board members discussed office staffing needs and stated that during the last election many staff members worked extremely long hours and a number were sick and still worked. They asked if temporary staff members might be eligible for these new state positions. Director Mickley said yes if they meet the qualifications. He would then need to backfill for those temporary positions.

Diane Butler asked if the State was providing funds to cover UOCAVA activities being transferred to LBE's. Guy Mickley said no, that SBE had funded this function through a four year federal grant which has expired, so LBE's will assume any costs.

Budget -- Director Mickley said the budget for this fiscal year is tracking well. We are going to make some small changes to get through the year as far as supplies for the office, but otherwise, we are in good shape. The budget for next fiscal year has been preliminarily submitted, but he has not yet met with the county budget representative. He will present the submission at the next board meeting after meeting with the new budget coordinator to make sure everything is sound.

Post-Election Wrap-Up

Judges -- Paychecks have been sent to all judges and feedback has been taken from over 40% of our judges that responded to our Google questionnaire. The judges were once again (for the most part) very satisfied. We are currently doing some graphs of this year's responses to compare responses to those of previous years. If we consolidate polling places, we may need fewer judges for the next election cycle.

LWV -- The League of Women Voters supplied us with a final summary of their findings for polling places for both early voting and Election Day. Their summary is provided. There were no major issues identified.

Post-election clean-up – This has begun at the warehouse. All supplies have been removed from the carts and inventoried. All voted ballots have been pulled from the scanners and been boxed to keep for 22 months. Post-Election maintenance will begin in early February on the scanners and ballot marking devices. Ray Rankin asked about the need for a new trucking company to move equipment for the next election since Kane Company (Office Movers) has gone out of business. Guy Mickley indicated this will be addressed.

Voter Registration -- Registrations from the closure period around the election plus everything received since the election has been updated in the system. New voter notification cards have been sent out to all voters. Our statistics have been provided to you.

BOARD COUNSEL REPORT:

Mike Molinaro, Esq., asked Director Mickley if there were any upcoming legislative issues. Mr. Mickley indicated there are a few bills being presented which may need further discussion at the February meeting. Mr. Molinaro asked that the Board be informed of the MAEO Conference dates. Director Mickley stated that the State Board's biennial conference is now separate from MAEO's conference and he would keep the Board informed.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

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 Diane Butler.

Action: The Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 5:18 p.m.

The next regular open meeting of the Howard County Board of Elections is scheduled for Monday, February 27, 2017 at 4:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Phyllis A. West, Board Secretary

Donna K. Thewes, Board President