

MINUTES
Wicomico County Board of Elections
345 Snow Hill Road, Salisbury, MD 21804
Wednesday, March 18, 2020

ATTENDEES: Brad Bellacicco, Board President, Republican Member
Joseph Collins, Republican Member, via phone
Catherine Keim, Republican Member, via phone
Katrina Purnell, Board Secretary, Democratic Member, via phone
Peter Golba, Board Attorney, via phone
Anthony Gutierrez, Election Director
Dionne Church, Deputy Director, via phone

ABSENT: Sharon Morris, Democratic Member - excused

GUESTS: None

The Wicomico County Board of Elections met Wednesday, March 18, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.

Public notice was given and the agenda was posted at the Board of Elections office the week prior to the meeting. Additionally, a special public notice that, in compliance with the Governor's Order to prevent of spreading the COVID-19 virus, and in compliance with a directive from the State Board of Elections office, the board would not meet in-person but the public would have a way to call-in and listen to the meeting if they would like.

Brad Bellacicco, Board President, called the meeting to order, conducting a roll call of the board members and declared there was a quorum present.

Brad Bellacicco asked for approval of the February 19, 2020 minutes. Katrina Purnell made the motion to approve the minutes with revisions; seconded by Catherine Keim, passed, unanimously.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: (See Attached Copy)

The Director noted that no member of the public had contacted the office to get the call-in information for this morning's meeting.

In accordance with the Governor's Order and the State Board directives, the office is closed to the public except for appointments and the staff at this time are in Category 4, which means they are at home, not required to work but still getting their regular pay. The Deputy Director is in a category for Intermittent Emergency Essential employees, so she can come in, perform work and check on the office periodically. Since the Director cannot designate himself in this same category, he requested the chair entertain a motion to do so. Catherine Keim moved that the board president designate the Director to be in the category for Intermittent Emergency Essential employees. Katrina Purnell seconded; motion passed.

The Governor ordered the State Board to send him their plan on how we will conduct the June 2 Primary by Friday April 3. As we get more information on this plan, these staff designations will change.

Since the plan might not call for polling places to be open on election day, the Director asked the chair to entertain a motion to allow our Election Judges to be paid for attending training, since this emergency may not allow them to fulfill their work obligation. After discussion, Catherine Keim moved that when a polling place election is cancelled, any Election Judges who have already attended a training session will still receive \$30 pay for attending training. Katrina Purnell seconded; motion passed.

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The Director reported that after surveying the other local boards as directed by this board, we are the only local board in the state which does not use 2-person canvass teams, so we will plan on doing so this primary election, which will come just in time to handle the expected thousands of additional absentee ballots due to the COVID-19 emergency.

Additionally, the State Board has hired a project manager to begin the process to replace our aging electronic pollbooks, which is a good sign that it will be completed for the 2022 elections.

In response to a request by a board member, the Director asked the State Board budget officer what "special subsidy" is on our annual budget estimate. She said that for every employee enrolled in a health care plan, the agency is charged a special subsidy, used for current and future retirees' health insurance.

The Early Voting bus ad campaign started on Thursday, March 5, but since the dates are now wrong, the Director will cancel that ad.

OLD BUSINESS:

At the request of the Director, the board president tabled this item.

NEW BUSINESS:

The Director reported that Elise Koch has done a great job of acquiring many items to prevent the spread of COVID-19. He read the list of items, as requested by one of our board members. However, the list does not include gloves and masks. Katrina Purnell asked that we procure these items, too.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Katrina Purnell asked us to ask the State Board to ensure they also move the date of the close of registration since they are moving the Primary election date. She also requested they advertise this in press releases, also encouraging persons to get their voting information updated now.

Another board member asked how Same Day Registration would work. The Director will find out.

CLOSED SESSION:

Since not all board members could view the required document, at the request of the Director, the board president tabled this item.

MEMBERS TIME:

A board member asked if the new plan would include nursing homes; the Director noted that the Maryland Nursing Home program is a voluntary one on the part of the participants but they have closed to outside visitors at this time for their patients' safety.

BOARD ATTORNEY'S REPORT:

The board attorney noted that the Governor said the State Board and the Health Department would have to decide how to deal with Early Voting. They are also having a Board Attorney call on March 24. The State Board reiterated that staff should stay home if they are sick.

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ADJOURNMENT:

Brad Bellacicco announced the next scheduled meeting would be Wednesday, April 15, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.

Katrina Purnell made a motion to adjourn, passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



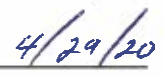
Brad Bellacicco, Board President



Date



Anthony Gutierrez, Recorder



Date

