

**MINUTES**  
**Wicomico County Board of Elections**  
**345 Snow Hill Road, Salisbury, MD 21804**  
**Tuesday May 12, 2020**

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

**ABSENT:** None

**GUESTS:** None

The Wicomico County Board of Elections met Tuesday May 12, 2020 at 10:00 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. No member of the public has contacted the office to obtain the call-in information for this morning's meeting

Brad Bellacicco, Board President, called the meeting to order, conducting a roll call of the board members, and declared that there was a quorum present. There were no recommendations for additions or changes to the agenda.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

The Director informed the Board that Wayne Burton, Election Information System Specialist, is in the process of conducting Logic and Accuracy testing on the voting equipment. Also, PAC-14 has been secured to provide live streaming of the canvass process. SBE approved the use of additional Ballot Marking Devices as requested at the May 7, 2020 Special Board Meeting. Next week, the SBE Call Center will begin receiving incoming calls to the LBE.

Ballots have been mailed to voters. The Deputy Director reported that, to date, 1,092 voted ballots have been returned, as well as 1,348 returned undelivered. In addition, she reported that there have been a number of calls from voters who need clarification on the process, or who are displeased with the mail-in process. Sharon Morris asked if voters who expressed displeasure voted. The Deputy Director stated that the procedures for returning ballots were reiterated. Some voters expressed that they would not vote; these voters were informed that if they wanted credit for voting they must return their blank ballot.

A motion was made by Sharon Morris to approve procedures sent to the Board by the Director; seconded by Catherine Keim, passed by majority. Joseph Collins, opposed.

There was extensive discussion surrounding concerns about the overall processes imposed by the State Board of Elections.

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In particular, Katrina Purnell asked for clarification regarding persons who will be able to be present in the building. The Director indicated that, per SBE directives, the canvasses will be conducted by LBE staff, with livestream available for the Board and the public.

Catherine Keim expressed concern regarding the opening and counting of ballots prior to election day, the Board not being physically present, as well as not examining signatures, protesting that the process as directed by the State has built-in potential for fraud. She expressed concern at the possibility that a voter could appear at the voting center to vote in person on election day, and that someone may have also fraudulently completed and returned their mailed ballot.

The Board reiterated concerns at being asked to certify the election if they are unable to be physically present during the process. Peter Golba, Board Attorney, said that the Board can provide a statement as to why it is not comfortable with the certification. He will send this COMAR regulation to the Board. Brad Bellacicco expressed the importance of wearing gloves while handling ballots, as fingerprints may be needed in the event of suspected fraud.

Peter Golba also stated that when returned ballots are put before the livestream cameras for inspection, care should be taken to conceal personal information and not make unnecessary comments. The Director stated that, in such a case, the personal information will be covered.

Catherine Keim asked about the process for undeliverable ballots. The Deputy Director explained that the particular process is dependent on what the USPS yellow sticker indicates.

The Board discussed their letter which was sent to SBE outlining their concerns about the SBE directives, to which there has been no reply to date.

A motion was made by Sharon Morris that the Director will send an email correspondence to SBE requesting a reply regarding email previously sent by the Director and Board President; expressing concerns that the Board is being asked to certify without actually being present to oversee the process; clarify if Board members can attend in accordance with existing social distancing; and concerns regarding opening and counting of ballots prior to election day (and including the wording from the original email); seconded by Catherine Keim, passed unanimously.

Peter Golba requested that the Director send to the Board an email with the dates and times that the Board is required to be available during the canvassing process.

Sharon Morris asked Peter Golba if an internal written statement can be composed reflecting the Board's view that, while they may be required by the State to certify the election, the process itself is not acceptable. Mr. Golba indicated that this can be discussed after the Board has an opportunity to read the provision in the regulations which he will provide.

Katrina Purnell asked if the processes from SBE were provided in writing. The Director cited the Governor's order and subsequent SBE plan dated 4/3/20, stating that the Board will only be required to participate and observe online at the start and end of the canvass, as well as times when decisions are made. SBE is requiring a review of questionable ballots to occur once a week.

Brad Bellacicco asked about Board members coming in to sign off on inventory of equipment, to which the Director stated that they will be. There will be further discussion as to how and when this will take place.

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**NEW BUSINESS:**

None.

**MISCELLANEOUS:**

None.

**CLOSED SESSION:**

None.

**MEMBERS TIME:**

None.

**BOARD ATTORNEY'S REPORT:**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

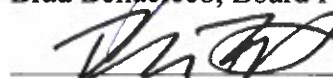
Brad Bellacicco announced that the next meeting will be Wednesday May 20, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.

Katrina Purnell made a motion to adjourn, passed unanimously; seconded by Joseph Collins, passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:48 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Brad Bellacicco, Board President

Date

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Bill Blockston, Recorder

5/22/20

Date