

MINUTES
Wicomico County Board of Elections
345 Snow Hill Road, Salisbury, MD 21804
Wednesday, October 21, 2020

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

ABSENT: None

GUESTS: None

The Wicomico County Board of Elections met Wednesday, October 21, 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. 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, there is a way for Board members to participate and members of the public to listen to the meeting via phone if they so choose.

One voter had previously expressed an interest in calling in to listen to the meeting but never responded when provided with the means to do so.

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.

Brad Bellacicco voluntarily led the Pledge of Allegiance and the Board chose to recite The Lord's Prayer.

Brad Bellacicco asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the September 16, 2020 meeting of the Board of Elections. Joseph Collins made a motion to approve the minutes with one correction; seconded by Sharon Morris, passed unanimously.

Brad Bellacicco asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the September 21, 2020 special meeting of the Board of Elections. Sharon Morris made a motion to approve the minutes with one correction; seconded by Joseph Collins, passed unanimously.

Changes to the Agenda: The Board of Canvassers will convene to rule on ballots which were received late for the 2020 Primary Election.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: (See Attached Copy)

Anthony Gutierrez, Election Director, referred the Board to the items listed on his Director's Report. The following items were highlighted.

A copy of the monthly financial report was provided to the Board at this meeting.

Logic and Accuracy testing was completed in just a week. The State Board staff has reviewed and approved our testing results, per regular procedure. Students from Salisbury University and UMES were supplied by the state to be our assistants in this process. The Election Director reported that they did a

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great job assisting us. The Election Director provided the Board with the certificate from the Logic and Accuracy testing for their signatures.

In reference to a question posed regarding whether guns are allowed in polling places, the Election Director provided a copy of the Annotated Code of MD Election Law (sent to him by Donna Duncan, State Board office) which states that persons other than law enforcement or security officers may not carry or display a gun or badge within 100 feet of a polling site on election day.

The Election Director reported that the County Council has expressed thanks for the hard work of this office, and for the Board opening the additional vote centers for election day. Senator Carozza and Delegate Hartman also commended the Board for opening the additional vote centers.

BOARD ATTORNEY'S REPORT:

Peter Golba stated that he would send information to the Board following next Wednesday's board attorney conference call in which he plans to participate.

OLD BUSINESS:

Sharon Morris inquired as to the makeup of election judges. The Deputy Director stated that originally all assignments were intentionally of equal ratio as to party affiliation. However, since then a number of election judges have dropped out, and replacements from the pool of available judges has shifted the ratio somewhat. Joseph Collins inquired as to the makeup of each vote center. The Deputy Director stated that every effort is made to keep an equal ratio; however, the law allows for some margin. This information is tracked in MDVoters. Certain functions are required to be performed by bipartisan teams, and in these cases, we ensure that this is so. Current election judges were prioritized, with a standby list maintained. Interested parties have been contacted via email. The Deputy Director stated she will follow up.

A motion was made by Joseph Collins to recess the meeting of the Board of Elections in order to convene the Board of Canvassers; seconded by Sharon Morris, passed unanimously. This meeting recessed at 9:20 a.m.

A motion was made by Katrina Purnell to convene the Board of Canvassers; seconded by Joseph Collins. The Board of Canvassers convened at 9:20 a.m.

17 ballots from the 2020 Primary Election were presented as untimely. A motion was made by Sharon Morris to reject these ballots as late; seconded by Joseph Collins, passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Sharon Morris to adjourn the meeting of the Board of Canvassers, and reconvene the Board of Elections; seconded by Joseph Collins, passed unanimously. The Board of Canvassers adjourned and the Board of Elections reconvened at 9:27.

The deadline for vote by mail ballots was October 20. We have received and processed approximately 16,500 applications, and have received approximately 8,200 ballots, with over 6,000 having been canvassed thus far.

We have 4 ballot drop boxes installed throughout the county.

The postcard mailing was sent, and sample ballots have been in the process of mailing. Vote center signs are ready for posting.

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In reference to the letter from Brad Bellacicco, Board president, to Micah Stauffer, Chief Operations Officer of the Wicomico County Board of Education, the Elections Director and the Election Judge Coordinator have visited the schools being used as vote centers, and met with Mr. Bob Souza, the Board of Education's Director of Facilities. The Election Director reports that we are in good hands, having seen the facilities and reviewed security matters with the Director of Facilities.

The Election Director also reported on a recent call with Tim Robinson, of the Wicomico County Sheriff's Office, who has, in turn, briefed Sheriff Mike Lewis on security matters discussed. Security personnel with Wicomico County schools, as well as from the Wicomico Circuit Court will also be available.

The Election Director asked Board attorney Peter Golba about the polling place mask policy issued by SBE. Peter Golba acknowledged that the situation may potentially allow for conflict. Discussion followed. Chief election judges will be the personnel who will address any issues that arise from this, and next week the mask policy will be discussed at the special provisional judge training. Signs regarding the mask policy will be posted, and extra masks will be onsite to offer voters if they need one.

There was also discussion regarding the allowance of campaign signs on the office property. The Election Director read the Deputy State Administrator's e-mail regarding the SBE policy on drop boxes regarding this, and discussion followed.

The Election Director stated that SBE has provided information regarding Board member site visits in the polling places. SBE has stated that there will be 2 site visits during early voting, and at least 25% of the sites on election day will be visited. The Deputy Director recommends that the Board conduct site visits to all vote centers on election day, and the Board agreed.

The Election Director will send an email to Board members regarding the upcoming meetings, functions and canvasses which members are required to attend, as well as those with optional attendance. The Board began to make plans for site visits to be conducted.

NEW BUSINESS:

None.

MISCELLANEOUS:

Joseph Collins inquired as to ballot inventory control, and it was explained that the Election Director and Deputy Director perform this function.

MEMBERS TIME:

Katrina Purnell related her involvement in facilitating persons, particularly elderly voters and residents of nursing homes, to vote.

CLOSED SESSION:

None.

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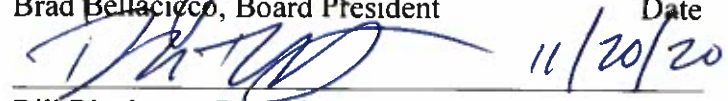
ADJOURNMENT:

Brad Bellacicco announced that the next regular meeting will be Wednesday November 18, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. The meeting will be conducted at the local board office unless County directives become more stringent as to preclude an in-person meeting.

A motion was made by Katrina Purnell to adjourn this meeting; seconded by Joseph Collins, passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:11 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,


Brad Bellacicco, Board President Date


Bill Blockston, Recorder Date

Revised 10/21/20