



Frederick County Board of Elections

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MINUTES of the
September 13, 2023, Meeting of
The Frederick County Board of Elections

The meeting was called to order at 2:02 pm, in person and virtually, by Board President Mary Costello.

PRESENT:

Mary Costello, President [via WebEx]	James Pride, Self
Nathaniel C.W. Wilson, Vice President	Kat Harper, Self
Shirley McDonald, Secretary	Linda Kulina, Self
Ted Neeves, Board Member	Larry Hill, Self
Michael Sowell, Board Member	Jay Kaminsky, Self
Daniel B. Loftus, Board Counsel [via WebEx]	Winston E. Mann, Self
M.C. Keegan-Ayer, County Council Liaison	William Woodcock, Self
Barbara Wagner, Election Director	Shelley Alois, Republican Central Committee
Thomas Coogan, Election Program Manager	Mari Lee, Democratic Central Committee [via WebEx]
Marc R. Welch, Voting Operations Manager	
Ian Astheimer, Voter Registration Lead	

ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

N/A

APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES

Per Mr. Wilson, on page 6, Mr. Black is described as a member of IT. He is actually the County Attorney.

Ms. McDonald made a motion to accept the August 2, 2023, meeting minutes. Mr. Neeves seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

COUNCIL LIASON COMMENTS

Ms. Keegan-Ayer discussed the resolution to repeal the requirement to be a registered voter and resident of Frederick County in order to serve on County boards, commissions, and committees. The resolution would allow students to serve on youth advisory boards and elsewhere. Ms. Keegan-Ayer asked for feedback from the Board.

Board members were in agreement that individuals should be residents of Frederick County in order to serve on County boards, commissions, and committees. Ms. McDonald said students should be

registered if older than 16.

Ms. Keegan-Ayer asked the Board to submit their thoughts via email. Mr. Neeves asked if each Board member should submit individual thoughts or if one email should be sent from the Board as a whole. After the discussion, Ms. Keegan-Ayer said she had enough information to report back to the Council without receiving an email.

Ms. Keegan-Ayer also provided an overview of the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) conference, which was held from August 16 through 19 in Ocean City. There were more than 1,800 people in attendance, the highest the conference's history. The Governor and Lt. Governor attended all three days, and every Secretary from the Governor's Cabinet appeared at some point during the duration of the conference. Transportation issues, planning issues, opioid settlements, and how settlement money is used were among the topics discussed. Ms. Keegan-Ayer described the event as "very successful" and said the winter conference will be held in December.

BOARD COUNSEL REPORT

The Attorney General's office filed opposition to Lois Gibson's appeal to the Fourth Circuit and is waiting for a ruling from the Court.

ELECTION DIRECTOR REPORT

1. Announcements and Important Meetings

- **Voter Outreach Events:**
 - ✓ The 275th Jubilee – June 10, 2023 (+100 Kids Voted – Results on Website)
 - ✓ PRIDE – June 24, 2023
 - ✓ FCDCC Monthly Meeting – July 18, 2023
 - ✓ Voter UP – Harry Grove Stadium – Frederick Keys – August 11, 2023
 - ✓ In the Streets – September 9, 2023
 - ✓ Federal Active/Retired Federal Association – September 12, 2023
 - National Voter Registration Day – September 19, 2023
 - Wonder Book and Video 4pm-6pm
 - Thurmont Regional Library 10 am-12 pm
 - Hispanic Heritage Festival – October 7, 2023
- MAEO Monthly Meeting – September 15, 2023 – 10:00 am
- 2023 Biennial Meeting of Maryland Election Officials – October 19, 2023
 - See draft agenda for details.
 - All Board members, Counsel, Director, and Deputy Director will attend in person.
- 2024 Election Candidacy

- The State website is the best place to get an up-to-date listing of candidates. Currently, there is one Board of Education candidate.

Primary Election – Tuesday, May 14, 2024

Early Voting Dates – Thursday, May 2-9, 2024

2. Voter Registration

VOTER REGISTRATION STATISTICS REPORT As of 9/13/2023

<u>TOTAL ACTIVE + PENDING:</u>		<u>199,226</u>		
<u>PARTY</u>	<u>ACTIVE</u>	<u>PENDING</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>PERCENT</u>
DEM	77,640	24	77,664	38.98%
REP	67,562	6	67,568	33.92%
LIB	1,196	0	1,196	0.60%
UNA	51,069	27	51,096	25.65%
OTHERS - TOTAL	1,699	3	1,702	0.85%
TOTAL	199,166	60	199,226	100.00%

VOTER REGISTRATION TRANSACTIONS REPORT August 2023

Additions to County Registration	1,412
Subtractions from County Active Status	1,395
Party Affiliation Changes	264
Address Changes within Jurisdiction	1,004
Name Changes	579

- Pending status – identification has not been able to be verified by either MVA or the Social Security Administration.

CURRENT PENDING VOTERS

As of 9/13/2023

<u>Reason</u>	<u>Number</u>
ID Not Provided	7
ID Not Verified	45
Incomplete Application	8
TOTAL	60

3. General and Continuing Items

Frederick County Board of Elections will be a designated satellite office for delegate filings starting in December. The State Board will train office staff. SBE is requesting all designated

sites to stay open until 9 pm to accept filings from January 29 through February 9.

Update: Surrender License Mailer – SBE sent out 14,000 letters to Maryland Voters who have been reported as surrendering their MD licenses in other states. 621 Frederick voters were sent letters. Most of these voters moved without notifying the Board of Elections. SBE is processing the responses. So far, they have logged 117 responses from Frederick voters:

- 47 have confirmed moving to a new state and have been cancelled.
- 17 have replied that they remain in the state of MD, and VR is unchanged.
- 53 have been returned as undeliverable. 9 of those contained some forwarding information on the return sticker and were sent to our office for NVRA processing.

Warehouse is in the process of being setup for 2024 voting system operations, including the purchase of worktables for conducting L&A testing, equipment recharging, etc.

Voting Systems Division

No new information currently.

Electronic Pollbook Project

While waiting for the official decision to use the new pollbook solution or return to the legacy system used in 2022, SBE instructed LBEs to act as if the new solution is a “no go”. The previous system will be reinstalled on the pollbooks.

Voter Registration Division is up to date on daily work. The ERIC report was released on August 25 and included all categories except Deceased. There were more than 6,500 possible address updates to review. The deadline for ERIC processing is Friday, September 15. The Deceased report will be released on Monday, September 18.

The August COP Audit was submitted on September 12.

Trainings – Voter Registration 101 – Washington County September 14, 2023

Grants Class (Barbara and Tom) – Annapolis September 28-29, 2023

Election Judge Division

The next Volunteer Voter Registration training is scheduled for October 19.

Judge applications are currently at 512 total, more than half of the expected need. 468 are returning judges; the incentive program has helped. 219 Democrats, 101 Republicans, and 60 Unaffiliated judges have been assigned so far. Republican judges are always needed. The Election Judge team will be conducting a meet-and-greet event in the office for potential judge applicants on October 12.

Robert Seebald has joined the office as an election consultant. He previously served as an

Election Judge trainer, Election Day dispatcher, and canvasser.

Social Media and Website Content is a group effort to update all sites/pages with the latest information. The Voter Registration Statistics page launched. Reports will be published by the 15th of each month.

The Board of Elections is approximately 8 months from the Primary Election on May 14, 2024.

Major goals include the following:

- Districts/Precincts Clean-Up to take out lines between precincts that already vote in the same place and share the same ballot style. These changes WILL NOT affect the place where the voter votes on Election Day.
- 56 Election Day Polling Places – affected by SB410.
- Pollbook Solution
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) – each division is tasked with going over current procedures and writing or re-writing them to a standard which can be given to any incoming employees to assist with training. To be completed in mid-October.
- Election Judge Pilot Program Assessment - October

Budget

A handout of the current budget was distributed for Board use only. The Board was asked to review and provide feedback. Only two months into the new fiscal year, there are not many anomalies.

Grants

The Board of Elections worked with the Office of Emergency Management to submit one project. The project includes adding an AI Phone in the front lobby.

BJAG Grant – Procurement and Contracting is currently processing the winning bid from our IFB. We are looking for completion prior to the October Board meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Board of Elections Bylaws – Amended

The requirement for in-person public comment had been inadvertently omitted. Ms. McDonald worked with Mr. Loftus to revise the bylaws to clearly differentiate between Board participation and public participation. Participation in meetings now has four clear parts.

Mr. Wilson requested two minutes to review.

Mr. Sowell moved to accept the bylaws with corrections. Mr. Neeves seconded. Mr. Wilson abstained. The motion passed with four in favor and one abstention.

Board members who attended the meeting in person will sign the bylaws today. Ms. Costello and Mr. Loftus will sign on Friday, September 19, 2023.

B. Board Orientation Retreat Planning Update

Mr. Neeves and Mr. Gutierrez collaborated on the plan for the Board's orientation. Board members will meet at the Board of Elections office in the War Room on Tuesday, October 24, 2023, from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, breaking midday for lunch. The retreat is for training purposes only. The Board will not be make any decisions or take any votes.

The agenda is ambitious, including reviews of Board duties and responsibilities, election law and regulations, voting equipment, canvassing, audits, and the Biennial Meeting. Ms. Wagner suggested reviewing Biennial Meeting agenda and removing redundant items to cut down on time.

C. Other

The postcard mailing will be moved from September to December or January to be more relevant in voters' minds. The template is ready, but Ms. Wagner anticipates a better response from voters if the postcards are sent closer to the Primary.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Assignment of Early Voting Centers and Drop Box Locations for the 2024 Presidential Elections

Mr. Welch presented the staff's recommendations for four Early Voting centers and ten drop box locations. Of the four EV centers, two would be returning locations from 2022 (Urbana Regional Library and Thurmont Regional Library), and two would be new locations (Middletown Volunteer Fire Department's Activities Building and Frederick Prospect Center, formerly the MAMSI/United Healthcare/State Farm building). Drop boxes would be located at all four EV centers. Other drop box locations would include the Board of Elections office, Brunswick Middle School, Oakdale High School, Talley Rec. Center, Waverley Elementary School, and Crestwood Middle School.

The deadline to submit the EV center and drop box location plan for 2024 to SBE is October 16, 2023.

Mr. Neeves moved to approve the recommendations, and Ms. McDonald seconded. Mr. Wilson asked for confirmation regarding camera monitoring, which Mr. Welch provided. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Other

N/A

DISCLOSURES

Ms. Costello made contributions to the President Biden reelection campaign and the Angela Alsobrooks Senate campaign.

There were no other disclosures.

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NEXT MEETING

The Board scheduled the next meeting for Wednesday, October 4, 2023, at 2:00 pm at 8490 Progress Drive.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Per the board's by-laws, public comment is allowed after the request has been approved by the Board President.

Mr. Kaminsky said there have been a lot of conversations about postcards on social media sites, including NextDoor. Users have asked what to do with postcards and have questioned their legitimacy. Ms. Wagner explained that the postcards will be informational mailers that provide households with the Board of Elections' current address as well as important upcoming dates related to the election.

Mr. Kaminsky expressed concerns about 8,400 ballots. Ms. Wagner said she already met with Mr. Kaminsky privately to address those concerns. Mr. Wilson noted that the 8,400 number does come up frequently, and he said the 6,500+ figure from the ERIC report may account for a significant portion of the total.

Mr. Kaminsky asked about recording meetings to increase public participation. Ms. Wagner said there are no plans to do so. Mr. Neeves said, per the bylaws, the formal record keeping method is written meeting minutes.

Mr. Kaminsky said, according to Clear Ballot, Maryland state had 8,200 blank ballots, including 1,187 in Frederick. Ms. Wagner explained that the scanning unit notifies the voter immediately if the ballot is blank. The voter has to choose to proceed to cast the blank ballot. The voters who cast blank ballots did so intentionally.

Ms. Harper said the UNDA language to request voter rolls seems to conflict with the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA). She has emailed SBE for clarification.

ADJOURNMENT

The motion to close was made by Mr. Neeves, seconded by Mr. Sowell, and passed unanimously. The meeting was called to a close at 2:54 pm by Ms. Costello.

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EXECUTIVE SESSION

An Executive Session was not held.

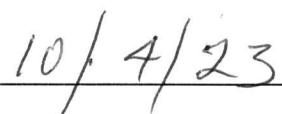
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Respectfully submitted by Ian Astheimer, Election Program Assistant

Approved by:



Mary Costello, Board President



Date