

MINUTES

February 3, 2021

MEETING OF THE ALLEGANY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
701 Kelly Road, Room 230, Cumberland, Maryland

ATTENDEES: John Stakem, President
Armand Pannone, Board Attorney (arrived at 9:30 AM)
JoAnn Spiker, Member
Timothy Donaldson, Member
John Fetchero, Member
Debbie Johnson, Member
Diane Loibel, Election Administrator

ABSENT: None

DECLARATION OF QUORUM PRESENT

Mr. Stakem called the meeting to order at 9:07 A.M., and stated that there was a quorum present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Stakem called for alterations, corrections, and/or approval of the minutes. Mrs. Spiker made a motion to approve the October 7th minutes. Ms. Johnson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

ADDITIONS

The Board of Canvassers meeting will be held following this meeting instead of before the meeting as we are awaiting board counsel.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Mr. Pannone did not have anything to report.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

OLD BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

General Election Overview

Turnout



Mrs. Loibel explained that the overall turnout for the general election appeared to be on average when comparing to other like elections.

2020	2016	2012	2008	2004
70.67%	71.96%	71.55%	71.35%	74.62

Mail-in Ballots

Mrs. Loibel stated that a total of 9,914 mail-in ballots were mailed out and we received a total of 9,013 voted ballots back for the election. Approximately 29.15% of voters who voted in the General Election voted a mail-in ballot.

Early Voting

Early Voting increased tremendously for this election. A total of 9,336 people voted during early voting. That's approximately 30.20% of the people who voted during the general election who voted by early voting. In the 2016 General Election, 3,704 people voted during early voting making up about 8.60%. For the 2020 General Election, we deployed 2 DS200s, 2 ballot marking devices, and three pollbooks for Early Voting.

Election Day

Election Day brought about many changes. As a result of Covid-19, we opened 6 vote centers instead of our normal 36 polling places. A total of 11,746 voters voted on Election Day, giving us a 38% turnout on Election Day. Vote centers were pretty evenly dispersed throughout the county with Mt. Ridge processing the most voters followed by Fort Hill, Allegany, Westmar, Flintstone, and the Allegany County Office Complex.

Same Day Registration

New for this election, voters were able to register and vote on election day at the vote centers. In the past, Same Day Registration was only available during Early Voting. We registered a total of 235 new registrants and made 105 address changes on Election Day.

Ballot-Drop Boxes

We had two ballot-drop boxes for the General Election. One here at the County Office Complex and the other was located at Mt. Ridge High School. A total of 3,561 ballots were dropped off at the County Office Complex and 894 dropped off at Mt. Ridge High School. Ballot-Drop boxes were well received by voters and we can expect additional drop boxes in the future.

Election Hero Day

Governor Hogan ordered a proclamation that November 2, 2020 be recognized as Election Hero Day to recognize the heroic efforts made by election administration and poll workers, and urges voters, businesses,

organizations, public officials, and all candidates for public office across our state to join in celebrating and thanking these individuals.

Mileage Reimbursement

Beginning on January 1, 2021, the standard mileage rate for the use of a personal vehicle will be 56 cents per mile driven for business use, down 1.5 cents from the rate for 2020.

Financial Disclosures

2021 Financial Disclosures are due by April 30, 2021. Everyone should have received an email regarding their financial disclosure. Please let the office know if you will need assistance with your filing.

FY22 Budget

Mrs. Loibel stated that work has begun on the FY22 budget. As mentioned in the past, now is the time to start restructuring the office. With looking at a retirement in 2026, it is imperative that we begin the process of training now, since it takes several years to gain the experience and confidence in working in this office. I am recommending that the board request the following actions in the form of a letter addressed to Mr. Jason Bennett, Director of Finance and the current Acting County Administrator:

- Request for a deputy director position to begin in July 2021. This should be a Grade 11 in the Classified Service;
- Request to make our vacant part-time position a full-time Registrar position to begin in 2021; and
- Request 15% salary adjustments for all employees across the board. This will better align our salaries with our colleagues across the State.

Ms. Debbie Johnson made a motion to send a letter to Mr. Jason Bennett for the deputy director position, moving the part-time position to a full-time position and the salary adjustments for all current employees. Mr. John Fetchero seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Manual Ballot Tabulation Audit

The Manual Ballot Tabulation Audit for the 2020 General Election will be held on Monday, February 8, 2021 at 9:00 AM at the County Office Complex. The inclement weather make-up date will be Monday, February 15, 2021 at 9:00 AM at the County Office Complex. We will be auditing 437 ballots from early voting, 1103 ballots from the Allegany County Office Complex vote center selected by SBE, 15 mail-in ballots, and 15 provisional ballots.

Post-Election Maintenance

Post-Election Maintenance on all voting equipment must be completed by April 12, 2021. We have been asked to hold off clearing the CF cards at this time. There are several additional steps that need to be taken during the pollbook

maintenance in order to get them ready to be returned to the State's central warehouse.

FY21 Inventory

Under the State's inventory policy, we have to complete our inventory within the last 90 days of the fiscal year. For this reason, Keith Ross at SBE requested an extension to allow us to begin our inventory with Post-Election Maintenance. This way, we will only have to touch the equipment once.

FY22 Pollbook Project

The FY22 Pollbook Project kickoff has begun. There are four focus groups that staff can sign up for including Data management, Hardware, Processes I – On Site Management, and Processes II – Vote Check-in. They are also holding monthly status meetings to keep us updated on this project. We will also be attending agile training coming up in the future.

2021 Legislative Update

A copy of election related bills was sent out to all members for their review with the board packet. We will be covering bills being heard on January 19th and January 26th today.

Legislative Bills being heard on January 19th:

- HB 163 – SBE Membership Appointments – Appointments by President of the Senate and Speaker of the House
- HB 202 – Election Law Presidential Electors – Selection and Voting
- HB 206 - Requiring early voting centers to be open during the hours between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. during each early voting day in elections other than a presidential general election.
- HB 222 - Value My Vote Act - Requiring the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to provide each individual who is released from a correctional facility with a voter registration application and documentation informing the individual that the individual's voting rights have been restored; requiring the State Board of Elections to adopt certain regulations establishing a program to inform eligible voters incarcerated in correctional facilities of upcoming elections and how to exercise the right to vote.
- HB 245 - Election Judges - Training and Signs - Accommodations for Voters in Need of Assistance - requiring that certain training materials used by the program of instruction for election judges include oral and written instruction in certain methods an election judge may use to assist or accommodate elderly and disabled voters in voting; requiring the State Board of Elections to develop a sign stating the various methods election judges may use to assist or accommodate elderly and disabled voters; and requiring that a certain sign be a certain size and posted prominently at the entrance of each polling site.

- HB 247 - Election Law - Voting Order Priority - Individuals Who Need Extra Assistance - Requiring a chief election judge to give voting order priority to individuals with certain mobility problems, individuals assisting others who have mobility problems, or an individual accompanied by a child with a disability; authorizing certain individuals to request voting order priority of any election judge serving at a polling place or early voting center; and requiring the State Board of Elections to adopt certain regulations.
- HB 265 - General Assembly – Special Election to Fill a Vacancy in Office - Proposing an amendment to the Maryland Constitution to require an individual appointed by the Governor to fill a vacancy in the office of Delegate or Senator in the General Assembly to serve for the remainder of the term if the vacancy occurs after a certain date; requiring that a special election be held at the same time as a certain regular statewide election to fill a vacancy in the office of Delegate or Senator in the General Assembly if the vacancy occurs on or before a certain date.
- HB 335 - Election Law – Party and Elected Public Offices – Prohibitions - Providing that certain provisions of law do not apply to certain individuals; prohibiting individuals from simultaneously being a candidate for a party office and an elected public office; and prohibiting individuals from simultaneously holding a party office and an elected public office.
- HB 369 - Election Law – Foreign Manufacture of Election Systems – Notification and Termination of Contract - Prohibiting the State Board of Elections from approving a contract with an election service provider unless the contract requires the election service provider to report to the State Administrator of Elections if any stage in the manufacturing of a component of the provider's election system occurred outside the United States or if any material change to a component in any stage in the manufacturing of an election system occurred outside the United States; requiring the State Administrator to forward the report within 5 days.
- HB 398 - Election Law – Time Off for Employee Voting - Requiring every employer in the State to allow any employee, rather than any employee who claims to be a registered voter, in the State up to 2 hours absence from work to vote in an election, rather than only on election day; altering the requirement that certain employees furnish to their employers certain proof to specify that the proof be reasonable and furnished in a timely manner; and prohibiting an employer from discriminating, retaliating or taking any form of reprisal against an employee who is absent from work to vote.

Legislative Bills being heard on January 26th:

- HB 53 - Election Law - Voting Rights - Imprisoned Felons - Altering the circumstances under which an individual is not qualified to be a registered voter for the purpose of allowing individuals convicted of a felony and serving a court-ordered sentence of imprisonment for the conviction to register to vote; repealing a requirement that certain officials of the circuit court and the District Courts report certain

information to the State Administrator of Elections regarding individuals convicted of a felony.

- HB 57 - Voters' Rights Protection Act of 2020 - Prohibiting a local board of elections from making a covered change in voting locations except under certain circumstances; requiring a local board to attempt to contact a voter who failed to sign a paper absentee ballot application and attempt to obtain the voter's signature for a certain purpose; prohibiting a person from using a camera, a cellular telephone, or another device capable of recording video to record voters as they approach or deposit ballots in a ballot drop box except under certain circumstances.
- HB153 - Election Law - Elections by Mail - Requiring each local board of elections to send by non-forwardable mail, a vote-by-mail ballot to each individual who is registered to vote as of the 21st day before the day of each election; requiring that vote-by-mail ballots be mailed at a certain time; requiring a voter to take certain actions to vote a vote-by-mail ballot; requiring that the instructions provided with each vote-by-mail ballot include a certain warning.
- HB 274 - Election Law - Elections by Mail - Requiring each local board of elections to send a vote-by-mail ballot by mail to each individual who is registered to vote as of a certain day before the day of each election; requiring the vote-by-mail ballots to be mailed at a certain time; requiring a voter who receives a vote-by-mail ballot and who decides to vote in person to discard the vote-by-mail ballot; authorizing a voter who discards a vote-by-mail ballot under a certain provision of this Act to vote by certain other methods.
- HB 156/SB 283 - Student and Military Voter Empowerment Act - Requiring a local board of elections to contact and obtain input from large residential institutional communities including institutions of higher education, continuing care retirement communities, senior communities, and military installations when establishing precinct boundaries and designating the location of polling places; requiring the State Board of Elections to maintain a page on its website that includes certain information about and links regarding voter registration and voting by certain students.
- HB 211 - Election Law - Early Voting Centers - Days of Operation - Requiring an early voting center to be open beginning the second Thursday before a primary or general election through the Saturday, rather than the Thursday, before the election.
- HB 341 - Election – Absentee Ballot Canvass – Start and Release of Tabulation - Altering the earliest day on which a local board of elections may open an envelope of an absentee ballot from the Wednesday after election day to 14 days before election day; altering a requirement for a local board to release an unofficial absentee ballot vote tabulation at the end of each day of canvassing to apply only on

and after election day; prohibiting a person from releasing a partial or complete tabulation of absentee ballot votes before a certain time.

- HB 355/SB 37 - Election Law - Registered Voter List Security and Electronic Signature Requirements for Petitions - Requiring the State Board of Elections to adopt regulations specifying requirements for the secure storage and use of voter data for copies of the registered voters list; requiring the State Board to adopt regulations specifying procedures for the collection of electronic signatures on petitions; authorizing certain petitions to contain the electronic signature of certain individuals; requiring electronic signatures to be electronically signed, typed, or affixed to a certain form.

Computer Systems and Software Security Updates:

Mrs. Loibel reports that office staff has successfully applied the Microsoft Security updates for the month of January on SBE workstations. We have also updated other third-party software applications to their latest versions on all workstations.

Registration Statistics:

Statistics as of January 31, 2021 were as follows: Total Active Registration 43,834, 12,655 Democrat, 22,637 Republican, 74 Green, 209 Libertarian, 27 Working Class, 21 Bread & Roses, 7,804 Unaffiliated, and 407 Others.

Board Members Report:

There was nothing to report.

Disclosure of Campaign Contributions:

There was nothing to report.

Next Meeting:

The next regular meeting will be held on March 3, 2021 at 9:00 A.M.

Adjournment:

Mrs. Johnson made a motion for adjournment. Mr. Donaldson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Stakem adjourned the meeting at 10:15 A.M.

