

Minutes

Talbot County Board of Elections
215 Bay Street, Suite 7
Election Board Office Conference Room
Easton, MD 21601

June 20, 2024

Present:

Board

Susan MacKinnon	(D)
Denise Lovelady	(R)
Walter Black	(D)
Barbara H. Perry	(D)
Gugy Irving III	(R)

Staff

Tammy Stafford, Talbot County Election Director
Donna Hacker, staff member

Board Attorney

Lyndsey Ryan

Public Attending

Members of the public were in attendance

The monthly meeting of the Talbot County Board of Elections was held June 20, 2024, in the Conference Room indicated above. Ms. MacKinnon called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. and noted that a quorum was present. She welcomed guests and reminded all of Public Comment protocols.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. MacKinnon asked if the Board had any corrections or additions to the minutes of May 15, 2024. There were none. Mr. Black moved to accept the minutes. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Changes to Agenda

Ms. MacKinnon asked if there were any changes to the agenda. There were none.

Approval of the Agenda

Ms. MacKinnon asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Ms. Perry moved to accept the agenda. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Public Comments

Three members of the public, Mr. Judy, Ms. Wilcoxon and Mr. Bernard commented that they felt the April minutes did not contain all that had transpired during the Public Comment period. Live streaming of the Board of Election meetings was requested.

Two members of the public, Ms. Wilcoxon and Mr. Harrison, questioned the location of cameras at the Drop Boxes and inquired as to what law dictates the placement.

Mr. Judy had documents from two people who are getting Board of Election mail at addresses where they no longer live. He gave these to Ms. Stafford. He passed on a complaint from a Republican voter who indicated that the poll book had his party affiliation wrong.

Ms. Wilcoxon said that an MPIA request from Christopher Gleason had not been addressed and that she will resubmit it.

Mr. Bernard requested that the Pledge of Allegiance be said at Board meetings. He stated that he thought Representative Harris could get a flag for the Board.

Election Director's Report

Ms. Stafford provided the Board with a written Director's Report on activities since the last Board meeting. A copy of the report is attached to these minutes. Ms. Stafford provided updated information on personnel, voter registration activities, precinct and polling issues, other projects and upcoming meetings/events.

Under personnel, she may need two weeks in coordination with HR to prepare for the interview process for the Election Program Manager II position.

Under voter registration activities, with voter registration having reopened on May 28, 2024, the office is pretty much caught up on updating.

Under precinct and polling issues, Ms. Stafford said there is an alternate entry location at the Community United Methodist Church in Royal Oak where the election equipment can be brought in. Mr. Black asked if the church had submitted the estimate to repair the chipped tile. Ms. Stafford said she does not yet have it but once she does, she will submit it to the Board.

Under other projects, 11 people received voter registration training. If anyone else needs this training, they should contact Ms. Stafford.

Under upcoming meetings/events she is waiting for the agenda for the MAEO Conference. The meeting will be both in person and virtual and board members need to attend.

Board Attorney's Report

Ms. Ryan stated that there had been three certificates for Challengers and Watchers received by election judges during the primary election that were signed by Ms. Lovelady but Ms. Lovelady confirmed that she had not signed them. Ms. Ryan proposed that she send a letter to the Republican Central Committee reminding them that these certificates need to be signed by the current chair or vice-chair. It appeared that some old, signed forms had been found and used. Ms. Stafford stated that the normal procedure is that the Challengers and

Watchers are trained and lists are provided to Ms. Stafford of who the Challengers and Watchers are prior to opening of the polls. Neither party submitted such lists. Ms. Ryan asked the Board's approval for her to send a letter, via email, to the Republican Central Committee explaining what had happened and the proper procedures that need to be taken. Mr. Irving suggested that letters should be sent to both central committees. Mr. Black moved that these letters be sent to both central committees after they have been reviewed by the Board. Mr. Irving seconded and motion was approved.

Old Business

- A. Facility for Election Office** - Ms. Stafford met with the County Manager concerning a new facility. It appears we will be in the current location until 2026. The State Board of Elections is working on guidance for warehouse needs that may help to define what space is needed for a new office. The old Safeway building is no longer an option and the Cadmus location is also out. Ms. Stafford will continue to work on identifying issues with current location and what our needs are for a permanent location. There was a lengthy discussion on warehousing needs, climate control that is needed, possible other locations in Talbot County, and parking needed if early voting is held at the Board's office location. Mr. Black asked when will Ms. Stafford have her next meeting with the County. Nothing is scheduled but Ms. Stafford suggested that a plan be submitted to the County Engineer. A work session with the County Manager and the Board could be scheduled. Ms. MacKinnon said it is important to keep us in the county's mind after the November election especially since our office had been in multiple locations over the years.
- B. FY25 budget** - The County Council has approved the FY 2025 budget and forwarded it by cover letter to Ms. MacKinnon, board president. Mr. Black asked if we will be able to operate within the budget as directed in the letter. Ms. Stafford said she felt we will since for FY 2024, we are under budget. A couple of line items in the FY 2025 budget were explained.
- C. By-Laws** – Ms. Stafford stated that the State Board of Elections had just begun reviewing county by-laws at their May meeting. Ours were not in that batch. She hopes ours will be reviewed at their June meeting.
- D. Board Emails** - There was a lengthy discussion among board members about having an official email separate from our personal email accounts. Various options were discussed along with any costs involved and how these emails would be archived and who would be responsible to retrieve them in response to PIA requests. Ms. Stafford advised that if the Board had county email accounts, we would be mixing a state agency with the county which could cause additional work for the county if they were the archive agency. In addition, it was discussed how these separate email accounts would need to be handled in order to comply with the Open Meetings Act. The Board of Elections office staff handles the day-to-day operation with the Board having broad oversight of the office. So, since board members do not have the information to answer requests nor should we be the ones to do so, we would have to forward any emails addressed to us as individuals to the Board office for a single,

coordinated response that is now handled by Ms. Stafford along with Ms. Ryan. Board members then expressed their preference on whether or not to have a separate email account that would be posted on the Board of Elections website or to keep things as they are with just the office email account as the only official account posted on the website. Ms. Lovelady made a motion for board members to have email accounts separate from their personnel accounts. There was no second and the motion failed.

Ms. Ryan suggested that the public could submit letters to the office for consideration under a "letters and requests" item on the agenda. These requests would be reviewed by the Board President along with the Election Director. If accepted as something the Board should discuss, it would be discussed during the letters and requests section of the agenda. It was suggested that a statement be put on the website advising the public that they can submit letters or requests for action 14 days prior to the next scheduled board meeting. These would then be reviewed for possible inclusion on the agenda. Mr. Black so moved, motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

New Business

A. Primary Election Report – a copy of the 2024 Primary Election Report is attached.

Ms. Stafford explained that the 2 election judges that were not eligible were chairs on a candidate's election committee. Wait list reflects persons who signed up after training had ended and consisted of 30 Democrats, 8 Republicans and 3 Unaffiliated. Ms. Stafford is still trying to increase interest in being an Election Judge and retaining them for future elections. The ideal would be to have double the 123 that is needed since people drop out for various reasons. Try to use returning judges as Chief and Provisional Ballot judges, and place judges as close to their home address as possible. However, most judges come from the Easton area making it difficult to staff outlying areas (Tilghman, Cordova) in a party balance fashion. From the experience with this primary, two polling places will need increased staffing to be more party balanced (Easton High School and Oxford). Mr. Irving asked if trained judges need to be retrained for the General Election. Ms. Stafford stated that it is required by law that judges be trained twice in a presidential election. Ms. Stafford's plan is to streamline training by having the first 4 overview chapters be done online and to spend more time with on-hands job training. Retraining is not required in non-presidential election years but it is good to have some refresher and lessons learned training session. Ms. Lovelady mentioned people who had received letters stating that the staffing was full then soon after got letters asking if they wanted to be on standby. She felt the wording was confusing and hopes this will not happen in the general election. Ms. Stafford said that she would revisit how these email letters are worded.

It was noted by Ms. MacKinnon and Ms. Lovelady that the trend seems to be that mail-in ballots are being used more and that Democrats are doing so more than Republicans. Ms. MacKinnon thanked Ms. Stafford for the information in this report.

As a final note, Ms. Stafford said there were no major issues during the Primary. Camera trailers will be utilized at both Drop Box locations in the General Election.

Disclosures – Ms. Perry provided a letter with a photo of Democratic yard signs at her home. Ms. Lovelady provided a letter with her quarterly donations.

Confirmation of next meeting

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Elections will be on Wednesday, July 17, 2024 at 9:30 a.m.

Canvass Board Post Election Certification meeting – At 12:05 p.m. Mr. Black moved to convene the Board of Canvassers. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously. Mr. Black as the president of the Board of Canvasser declared a 10 -minute break at 12:07 p.m. The Board reconvened at 12:17 p.m. At 12:33 p.m. the Board of Canvassers concluded and the Board of Elections resumed its meeting.

Closed Session – At 12:33 p.m. the Board entered into Closed session to discuss a personnel matter. Closed session ended at 12:37 p.m. with no action taken.

Adjournment

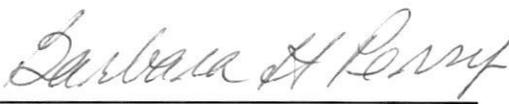
Ms. Black moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 12:37 p.m.

Attested,

Respectfully submitted,



Susan MacKinnon, President



Barbara H. Perry, Secretary

TALBOT COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
ELECTION DIRECTOR'S REPORT

June 20, 2024

Notice and Distribution of Materials

Meeting materials were prepared and mailed to Board Members June 11, 2024.

The Agenda for the June meeting was posted on the Board of Elections web page June 10, 2024. The agenda was posted on the office door and in the entrance of the building June 11, 2024.

Personnel:

The Job posting for the Election Program Manager II position has closed. I am working with HR to prepare for the interview process. We hope to have this completed by next week.

Meetings Attended:

Nothing to report at this time.

Correspondence:

A letter was sent from the County Manger's office indicating the Elections Operating Budget for FY25.

Voter Registration Activities:

Monthly Statistical Report- The Report was distributed to board members in the monthly packet. As of June 7, 2024, there were 28, 775 active registered voters in Talbot County and 1, 696 Inactive voters, for a total voter count of 30, 471.

Voter Registration re-opened May 28, 2024 for in office processing. Voters were able to register to vote during early voting and on Election Day at the polling place.

Voting System Activities:

Staff is waiting for the State Board of Elections to release equipment for post election maintenance (PEM).

Candidate Filing:

Nothing to report.

Precinct and Polling Issues:

Fred and I visited Community United Methodist Church in Royal Oak to assess damages caused when equipment was moved into the building during the primary election. The building was also inspected to determine if we can continue to use the building as a polling place.

Budget:

A report documenting Board of Elections Expenditures for FY 2024 as of June 10, 2024 was included in the Board packets. We are under budget for the fiscal year.

Other projects:

Office staff conducted a Voter Registration Volunteer Training June 18.

Upcoming Meetings/Events:

MAEO Conference will be a one-day event held at the Baltimore County Board of Elections Office, Tuesday, August 20, 2024.

TALBOT COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

2024 Primary Election Report

June 11, 2024

1. VOTER TURNOUT

YEAR	POLLS	EV	Vote By Mail	PROV	ELIGIBLE VOTERS	TOTAL	%TOTAL	
2024	3,259	1644	2961	102	23,265	7,966	34.24%	4th in State
2018	4,424	2905	280	104	21612	7,713	35.69%	1st in state
2020	342	N/A	10,039	41	22,029	10,422	47.31%	2nd in State
2022	3,955	2479	2542	233	22,334	9,209	41.19%	1st in State

- 25% decrease in voters voting in person during early voting and election day compared to 2022.
- 16.5% increase in Mail in Ballots compared to 2022.

2. EARLY VOTING

YEAR	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6	DAY 7	DAY 8	TOTAL	%TOTAL	
2024	265	178	119	100	224	234	215	311	1646	7.08%	Tied 1 st in State
2018	509	437	164	135	394	397	375	487	2898	13.41%	Highest in State
2022	297	358	161	108	278	332	332	618	2484	11.12%	Highest in State

YEAR	PARTY	DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6	DAY 7	DAY 8	TOTAL	%TOTAL	ELIGIBLE VOTERS
2024	DEM	107	80	50	39	99	93	103	137	708	6.71%	10553
	REP	157	98	69	61	124	141	111	174	935	8.05%	11608
	UNA	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	2.00%	1035
	TOTAL	265	178	119	100	224	234	215	311	1646	7.08%	23265
2018	DEM	271	204	94	78	190	201	204	261	1503	14.90%	10087
	REP	238	233	70	57	204	196	171	226	1395	12.10%	11525
	TOTAL	509	437	164	135	394	397	375	487	2898	13.41%	21612
2022	DEM	135	152	72	47	124	132	145	246	1053	9.79%	10754
	REP	162	206	89	61	154	200	187	372	1431	12.36%	11580
	UNA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0
	TOTAL	297	358	161	108	278	332	332	618	2484	11.12%	22334

3. MAIL IN BALLOTS

YEAR	SENT	RECEIVED			TOTAL
		DEM	REP	UNA	
2024	3955	1933	998	30	2961
2018	338	164	115	0	279
2020	21,382	4,952	4,541	0	9,493
2022	3253	1781	761	0	2542

- Increase of 961% increase from 2018.
- Increase of 16.5% from 2022.

4. ELECTION JUDGES

	RECRUITED/ SIGNED UP	TOTAL TRAINED	TRAINED WORKED	TRAINED DID NOT WORK	NOT INTERESTED/ NOT AVAILABLE	NOT ELIGIBLE	WAITLIST
	199	129	114	15	27	2	41
DEM	106	63	55	2	12	1	30
REP	77	54	42	12	14	1	8
UNA/ OTHER	16	12	11	1	1	0	3

- Waitlisted individuals were contacted at least twice.
- Training was offered up until the start of Early Voting; later trainings included online and hands on combination.
- Tried to use returning judges to fill Chief Judge and Provisional Judge openings as much as possible.
- Judges were kept as close to their home precincts as possible. Exception being judges who trained later.
- Majority of Judges are from the Easton area, which can make it harder to staff smaller polling places.
- Early Voting was staffed with 16-18 judges daily.