

## **Minutes.**

Talbot County Board of Elections  
215 Bay Street, Suite 7  
Conference Room 1  
Easton, MD 21601  
*March 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

### **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 March 20, 2024, in the meeting room 1 at the Board office indicated above. Ms. MacKinnon called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. and noted that a quorum was present.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Ms. MacKinnon asked if the Board had any corrections or additions to the minutes of February 21 and minutes of the Special Meeting on January 25, copies of which board members had. Attachments were provided for the February 21 minutes and with those attachments Ms. Perry moved to accept both minutes. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

### **Additions/Changes to Agenda**

Ms. MacKinnon asked if there were any changes to the agenda. Ms. Lovelady brought up the question of board members having Maryland.gov email addresses. Ms. MacKinnon said that this topic will be covered in the closed session.

### **Approval of the Agenda**

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

### **Public Comments**

Ms. Wilcoxon read her email from March 18, 2024, which addressed the lawsuit against the Maryland State board of elections concerning non compliance in answering PIA requests for our emails and texts. She asked if we are getting emails and are we getting them from the talbot county board email address.

Mr. Bernard asked where were our name plates and the copies of the agenda for the public. He also asked why there was no flag or pledge of allegiance at our meetings. Ms. Stafford said she would like to answer and said she has been very busy with the training of election judges and in her rush to get to the meeting she forgot the name plates and agendas.

Ms. Judy asked why there was no Public Comment at the Special Meeting on January 25 and stated that someone other than Ms. Stafford should have taken the minutes.

Mr. Gunsallus said that there was poor communication concerning non-response to PIA request. He stated there was too much secrecy and someone should do what is right. He mentioned whistleblower protections.

Ms. Judy asked if we were hearing what they are saying. In response, Ms. MacKinnon stated that the public has a right to comment and that we listen.

### **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 noting that the state approved the new position of Election Program Manager II so there will need to be a panel to conduct interviews.

Under Voting System Activities, Ms. Stafford noted that the proofing of ballots and audio for Ballot Marking Devices has been done.

Make up training for Election Judges will be the last week of March. There have been 123 and 10 standby judges trained with 7 voting judges still needing to be trained.

Ms. Lovelady asked for a breakdown of judges by party and assigned location. Ms. Stafford stated that there are 2 chief judges, of opposite party or unaffiliated, at each polling location and indicated that she will have a spread sheet with breakdown of all judges at our April meeting.

Ms. Lovelady brought up two ladies from Oxford who felt they had received rejection letters to then later receive letters asking if they wanted to be on a standby list. Ms. Stafford stated that these were not rejections but an indication that all positions were now filled for the primary and asked if they wanted to be on a wait list which the BOE has had trouble in the past to try to maintain. Ms. Lovelady questioned the wording of the letters.

### **Board Attorney's Report**

Ms. Ryan stated that the State Board of Elections Counsel will have a meeting later in April. Concerning PIA requests Ms. Ryan stated that Ms. Stafford retains all communication and coordinates with Ms. Ryan for the response. Ms. Ryan said she can do a

spread sheet to let the Board know of all requests. In response to a request for configuration reports, the response has been that these are printed and in a binder at the Board of Elections. An offer has been made for a meeting where these binders can be reviewed with Ms. Stafford rather than having to print them and charge for the cost to do so. No response has been received.

Ms. Lovelady asked how other counties are providing the data. Ms. Ryan said she would have to reach out to find out.

### **Old Business**

**A. Facility for Election Office** - Nothing to report.

**B. FY25 budget** - The budget was presented to the County Council March 15, 2024 and is now in deliberation. Mr. Irving asked why is there a need to purchase a vehicle rather than renting one. Ms. Stafford stated that it was not feasible in an emergency and gave an example of an incident when she tried and was told that all large cargo vans had been taken. There are multiple needs for a vehicle such as collecting mail-in ballots, visiting polling places and taking equipment to polling places.

Ms. Ryan stated that anyone wanting a copy of the budget could contact the County Council.

### **New Business**

**A. Confidential Voter Request** – Ms. Stafford is in receipt of such a request which will be addressed in Closed Session.

**B. Disclosure of Contributions** - Ms. Lovelady submitted her quarterly disclosure of contributions.

**C. Canvass and Election** –

**a. Board Responsibilities and Duties** – All members are members of the Board of Canvassers and will be sworn in at our regular April Meeting. Board members do evaluations of all 10 polling places. Assignments and packets on how to conduct the evaluations will be addressed at our regular April Meeting.

**b. Canvass dates-** Mail-in ballot canvass date is 8 days before the start of Early Voting. If we do not want to canvass then, we need to ask the State Board for a deferral. Our first canvass will be April 24, 2024 starting at 10:00 a.m. Mr. Black moved for our Canvass to be on April 24, 2024. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. *(After our meeting the Board was advised by Ms. Stafford that the date needs to be April 22, 2024, starting at 10:00 a.m.)* Provisional Ballots will be canvassed May 22, 2024 and the second canvass of Mail-in ballots will be on May 24, 2024.

### **Confirmation of next meeting**

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

**Closed Session** – Ms. Lovelady moved to go into closed session at 10:52 a.m. to discuss personnel matters including a confidential voter request and election judges, and to obtain

legal advice regarding the Public Information Act. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

The Board met in Closed session from 10:52 a.m. until 12:14 p.m. and no action was taken. The Board discussed personnel matters, including a confidential voter request and election judges and staff, and obtained legal advice on the Public Information Act.

After the closed session, Ms. Perry moved to approve the confidential voter request received which was seconded and approved unanimously.

**Adjournment**

Ms. Black moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Attested,

Respectfully submitted,



Susan MacKinnon, President



Barbara H. Perry, Secretary

**TALBOT COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS**  
**ELECTION DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

March 20, 2024

**Notice and Distribution of Materials**

Meeting materials were prepared and mailed to Board Members March 13, 2024.

A tentative meeting agenda was posted to the webpage March 12, 2024. The Agenda for the March meeting was posted on the Board of Elections office door and in the entrance of the building March 12, 2024.

**Personnel:** The state has approved the new position for the Election Program Manager II. Jim Butts, who is our election judge trainer, transitioned to County Tech March 12. We will also have a County Support Tech starting later this month.

**Meetings Attended:**

I attended the monthly meeting with SBE and other local boards. Our office met with county EMS and local law enforcement in preparation for the primary election.

**Correspondence:**

The office has received multiple PIA requests for various records related to the 2020, 2022, and 2024 election. Lyndsey and I are working on responses to those requests. We also received multiple requests that did not relate to the election process or our office. I have responded to them.

**Voter Registration Activities:**

**Monthly Statistical Report-** The Report was distributed to board members in the monthly packet. As of February 29, 2024 there were 28, 575 active registered voters in Talbot County and 1,750 Inactive voters, for a total voter count of 30, 325.

**Voting System Activities:**

We are currently in election mode. Staff is replacing CMOS batteries in the pollbooks; participating in election judge training; preparing to do user acceptance on two new scanners that we received; proofing ballots and audio for the Ballot Marking Device. Fred and I met with the transportation company for the scheduling of the election equipment delivery to the polling places and the delivery of drop boxes. Logics and analytics testing is scheduled to start in April.

**Candidate Filing:**

Nothing to report.

**Precinct and Polling Issues:**

**Election Judges-** Election Judge training started February 27, 2024 and will be completed this week for a majority of our judges.

We have had three judges drop out after training. The positions have been filled.

A copy of the quarterly election judge newsletter was included in your packet. Early voting sign ups have been sent to the judges. And the Election Judge Open House will be held April 18, 2024.

**Budget:**

A report documenting Board of Elections Expenditures for FY 2024 as of March 13, 2024 was included in the Board's packets.

I presented the FY2025 budget to council, Thursday, March 15, 2024. I have included the submitted budget in your packet.

**Other projects:**

Nothing to report.

**Upcoming Meetings/Events:**

**Early Voting-** Thursday, May 2, 2024 to Thursday, May 9, 2024 from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Easton Volunteer Fire House.

Town of St. Michaels is holding their election May 6, 2024.