

Minutes

Talbot County Board of Elections
215 Bay Street, Suite 7
Conference Room 1
Easton, MD 21601
May 15, 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 May 15, 2024, in 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. 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 April 17, 2024 and the Special Meeting minutes of April 5, 2024. There were none. Ms. Lovelady moved to accept both 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

Mr. Harrison requested to have our Board of Elections meetings live streamed.

Ms. Tillman stated that she had made three requests to Ms. Stafford to arrange for voter registration training for several people and was told middle of June. She would like an exact date.

Ms. Wilcoxon commented on party balance of election judges, in particular in Oxford. Asked who owns the cameras at Drop Boxes and are videos kept for 22 months. Commented that Early Voting time should be shortened since turnout was poor. Felt PIA requests are unresponsive and costs are overstated for copying.

Mr. Judy felt they were being stonewalled on information and again requested that Public Comments be moved to the end of the agenda.

Mr. Stepp congratulated board of election staff for management of the election. Stated he felt his wife had been disrespected at the last meeting and said to think before you speak.

Mr. Bernard commented on having a flag in the meeting room. Also wanted meetings to be live streamed to capture all that is said.

Ms. Judy asked why the most recent minutes were not on the website. Ms. Ryan explained that the minutes must first be approved at the next meeting and then they are posted on the website.

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 correspondence, voting system activities, and precinct and polling issues.

Under correspondence, Ms. Stafford received a new PIA request on the morning of May 14, 2024 and is working on it.

Under Voting System Activities, Ms. Stafford noted that one Ballot Marking Device that stopped working during early voting did not have any effect on voting since there were three BMD's that continued to work.

Under precinct and polling issues, Ms. Stafford said that there was damage to the flooring at the Royal Oak Church caused while moving in the heavy carts. The BOE will get an estimate of the cost to repair the damage.

Board Attorney's Report

Ms. Ryan stated she had nothing to report.

Old Business

- A. Facility for Election Office** - Ms. Stafford is making note of limitations that are associated with the current location.
- B. FY25 budget** - The County Council reviewed the Board of Elections budget on May 7, 2024. We are awaiting their approval.
- C. Board Emails** - Ms. Stafford reached out to the state and was advised that our board members could get official emails with the .gov extension at a cost of \$216 per

member paid annually. This could increase traffic at the office email. Ms. Lovelady mentioned the problem of getting input in the past when all emails go to just one site. Ms. MacKinnon asked Ms. Stafford how many emails she gets daily. Ms. Stafford said it varies but about 10 to 20. Ms. Lovelady and Ms. MacKinnon discussed the relevance of the volume of emails and the scope of the emails since the Board's function is that of oversight and not the day-to-day operation of the office. Ms. Lovelady felt that the Board's knowledge of such operations, such as PIA request, would only increase transparency but Ms. MacKinnon felt that the Board might then be assuming responsibilities that belong to the Director. There was more discussion on the timeliness of the Board receiving information about PIA requests since we are only updated at our monthly meetings. Ms. Lovelady felt the process could be tightened up.

Ms. Lovelady moved for the Board members to have separate emails. Mr. Irving seconded the motion. Discussion followed with Ms. Ryan pointing out that it would need to be noted on our website specifically what type of emails go to each address. There was concern over the cost for a .gov site. Mr. Irving mentioned that when he was on a local board, he was given a county email at no cost. Ms. Ryan stated that other county boards do have talbot.gov emails.

Ms. Lovelady amended her motion for Board members to have separate emails to now table the email discussion for a future board meeting and to have Ms. Stafford look into talbot.gov emails for our board. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

New Business

- A. Early Voting Update** – There was less turnout than previous elections but Talbot County tied for the highest percentage turnout. Need to look at staffing levels at early voting. Some election judges suggested shifts. To do shifts would need double the number of judges which was 123 for this primary election. As to changing the length of the early voting period which now is 8 days, that would be up to the General Assembly. A bill was introduced in the 2023 session to shorten the time but it did not pass. Ms. Stafford will have a more thorough overview of early voting at the Board's June meeting. Ms. Lovelady and Ms. MacKinnon, who both did evaluations during early voting, told Ms. Stafford that the site was set up well and that several of the chief judges indicated that this was the best organized of which they had been a part. Ms. Lovelady stated that she noticed that new cameras had been placed at the Drop Boxes. Ms. Stafford had asked Emergency Services if they could tie our cameras back to Emergency Services but was first told not available now but maybe for 2026. However, at a subsequent meeting Ms. Stafford was advised that cameras were available for this Primary Election and the General Election in November. The Drop Boxes as well as the cameras are being removed today.

Confirmation of next meeting

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Elections will be on Thursday June 20, 2024, at 9:30 a.m.

Closed Session – no closed session was needed.

Adjournment

Ms. Black moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 10:49 a.m.

Attested,

Respectfully submitted,



Susan MacKinnon, President



Barbara H. Perry, Secretary

TALBOT COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
ELECTION DIRECTOR'S REPORT

May 15, 2024

Notice and Distribution of Materials

Meeting materials were prepared and mailed to Board Members May 8, 2024.

The Agenda for the April meeting was posted on the Board of Elections office door and in the entrance of the building May 7, 2024.

Personnel:

Staff is working on completing the tasks for the Primary Election. Those tasks include preparations for canvass, completing election judge payroll for submission to the County Finance Department; reviewing election judge paperwork; reorganizing supplies for the General Election.

Meetings Attended:

I attended the monthly director's meeting with the Maryland State Board of Elections.

Correspondence:

I have not received any new PIA requests at this time.

Voter Registration Activities:

Monthly Statistical Report- The Report was distributed to board members in the monthly packet. As of May 1, 2024, there were 28, 762 active registered voters in Talbot County and 1,724 Inactive voters, for a total voter count of 30, 490.

Voter Registration closed on April 23, 2024 and will re-open May 28, 2024. Voters were able to register to vote during early voting and on Election Day at the polling place.

Voting System Activities:

Staff and County Techs visited the Earl Voting site throughout each day of Early Voting. A Ballot Marking Device Stopped working on Day 5 and Day 6 of Early Voting. There were 4 BMDs in the polling place, and this did not affect voting. We were able to get it working again. During post-election maintenance of the equipment, we will try to identify the problem.

Candidate Filing:

Nothing to report.

Precinct and Polling Issues:

At this time I have nothing to report, once the election has concluded, I will provide the board with an overview of the election.

Budget:

A report documenting Board of Elections Expenditures for FY 2024 as of May 7, 2024 was included in the Board packets.

Other projects:

Nothing to report.

Upcoming Meetings/Events:

Canvassing of the Mail-In Ballots will be held May 16, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.