

Minutes

Talbot County Board of Elections
215 Bay Street, Easton, MD 21601
Board of Elections Meeting Room

Wednesday, March 18, 2026

Present:

Board

Susan J. MacKinnon, President
Denise Lovelady, Vice President
Gugy Irving, III, Secretary
Barbara H. Perry, Member

Board Attorney

Lyndsey Ryan

Staff

Tammy Stafford, Election Director
Donna Kegley-Hacker, Election Program Manager II
Fred Gleockler, Election Program IT Specialist II

Members of the Public

Terrence Bernard, Self
Shari Wilcoxon, Citizen
Mark Harrison, Citizen
Jason Bell, Citizen
Gary Judy, Citizen
Larry Schuyler, Citizen

Absent/Excused:

Walter W. Black, Member

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Gleockler and Ms. Stafford confirmed that the live streaming was working.

Ms. MacKinnon called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

DECLARATION OF QUORUM PRESENT

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those in attendance.

Ms. Stafford asked Board President Ms. MacKinnon to re-state the introduction of the March 18, 2026, meeting as the sound was not on when she called the meeting to order.

With four of five Board members in attendance, Ms. MacKinnon declared that a quorum was present.

CLOSED MEETING SUMMARY

Ms. MacKinnon announced that there was a Closed Meeting Summary for the December 17, 2025, meeting. She asked the Board Attorney, Ms. Ryan, to read the summary. Ms. Ryan asked that this item be skipped and revisited later in the meeting.

APPROVAL OF OPEN MINUTES- 02/18/2026 Open Board Meeting

Minutes from the Open Board Meeting held on 02/18/26 were mailed in Board packets to members and were posted on the LBE website, allowing for review prior to this meeting. Ms. MacKinnon called for any corrections to the minutes.

With no requested corrections, a motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Perry and seconded by Mr. Irving. The motion passed unanimously by all members present.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

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

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mr. Irving motioned to approve the agenda. Ms. Perry seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by all members present.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Copies of the Board's Public Comment Protocols and Procedures were attached to the copies of the agenda available at today's meeting.

Ms. MacKinnon opened the floor for public comments. Three members of the public spoke.

1. Mr. Judy spoke on the issue of Election Judge parity. He stated that there seems to be enough Election Judges to make the 50% ratio/ Election Judge parity happen. He added that unless the same number of Democrat and Republican Election Judges receive the returning incentives, the incentives violate parity also. Mr. Judy also stated that there was an inference that more experienced judges are needed. He stated that Talbot County has not had a balance of judges for years, even though the County has a higher percentage of voters registered as Republicans (than Democrat). He ended by stating

that he could not see any reason that all elections in Talbot County in the future can not have Election Judge parity.

2. Ms. Wilcoxon read out loud Talbot County Voter Statistics (source unidentified). She stated that Talbot County has 102.2% registered eligible voters. She added that Talbot County has 95.98% of eligible registered voters that are active, far exceeding the national average of 73.6%. Ms. Wilcoxon stated that Talbot County is the 6th highest in the State for registered eligible voters exceeding 100%.

Ms. Wilcoxon went on to state that Election Director, Ms. Stafford, simply did not provide the Election Judge Parity Report that is required by law, with no explanation; she provided an empty template. Ms. Wilcoxon added that despite consistent questions from Board member Ms. Lovelady, Ms. Stafford did not answer questions and violated the law.

Ms. Wilcoxon brought up past Open Meetings Acts violations and the statistics she presented, concluding that “does anyone here wonder why we question everything the Board is doing and the Executive Director is doing?”. She finished by stating that she had data and paperwork for anyone to see.

3. Mr. Harrison suggested that the Talbot County Board of Elections set a precedent by showing the State Board of Elections that we are for fair and honest elections by enforcing voter id in Talbot County elections. He added that this sends a strong message that the majority of legal citizens in Talbot County who support voter id.

ELECTION DIRECTOR’S REPORT

Ms. Stafford’s written report which was mailed in the Board packets for review prior to the meeting is attached to these minutes. Ms. Stafford informed the Board that a few documents were not in the mailed packet but were posted on the State Board of Elections and Talbot County Board of Elections websites; these documents were provided in hardcopy to the Board at this meeting. These documents will be discussed during New Business.

Ms. Stafford highlighted all key areas of the report.

Ms. Stafford stated that she received correspondence after her report was prepared. She stated that she received an email addressed to the Board Chair and the Director about Election Judge parity. It was forwarded to the Board Chair and the Attorney. The email had a letter attached but the letter was not addressed to the Board.

Ms. Stafford informed the Board that the new voting equipment being considered for 2028 will be available for public viewing. A press release is posted on the website of the State Board of Elections.

Ms. MacKinnon opened the floor for questions from the Board.

Ms. Perry asked if Ms. Stafford reported (verbally) on Personnel. Ms. Stafford apologized for omitting it and provided an update.

Ms. Lovelady asked if there are Election Judges from both major parties still on the list/ not assigned. Ms. MacKinnon replied that Election Judges will be addressed under New Business.

Ms. MacKinnon asked about the over-expenditure of line item Dues & Subscriptions. Ms. Stafford stated that she would check into this. She stated that she did not think the line item was overspent and added that the line item includes dues for MAEO, IGo, the Election Center, and the local newspaper subscription. Ms. MacKinnon asked if a correction would be made, to which Ms. Stafford replied in the affirmative.

BOARD ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Ms. Ryan first revisited the Closed Summary Report. She announced that the Board met in Closed Session on December 17, 2025, from 10:03 am- 11:09 am, to discuss a personnel matter to conduct the evaluation of the Election Director.

Ms. Ryan added that she had nothing to report for this agenda item but would be reporting when the Board reaches the Open Meetings Act portion of the agenda.

Ms. Stafford announced that she had provided copies of the Assistant Attorney General's report from the February 2026 State Board of Elections meeting. Ms. Ryan stated that she can provide updates to litigation if the Board would find it helpful. Ms. MacKinnon stated that yes, that would be helpful.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to discuss.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Election Judges

1. Monthly Statistics and Assignments- Ms. Stafford provided two reports dated March 9 and March 12, 2026. She stated at the February meeting no election judges had been assigned. Since then, the office has been preparing for Election Judge training and are now mapping out assignments. The majority of Election Judges are returning judges and there are incentives through State legislation for

returning judges, as well as County or State employees to serve. Ms. Stafford added that if judges work during the Election they get paid to attend training.

Ms. Stafford emphasized that the LBE is recruiting Election Judges with the goal of having a pool of candidates to fill unexpected vacancies and/or serve as Standby judges. The pool can also be used to identify individuals who may be able to fulfill other Election worker positions.

Ms. Stafford highlighted the desire to have a diverse pool of judges, including ages and demographics; a majority of those who express interest in serving reside in the Easton area.

Ms. Stafford stated that the Statistical Report shows seven of the polling places are exactly balanced. She reminded everyone that the numbers are fluid and potentially can change up to Election Day. She added that efforts are being made to meet parity.

Concluding her summary, Ms. Stafford requested that the Board approve the assignment of 140 Election Judges as assigned by the Election Director, with 20 Chief Judges (1R/ 1D at each polling place), 14 Provisional Judges, 26 Check-in Judges, 69 Voting Judges, and 11 Standby Judges.

Ms. MacKinnon opened the floor for comments and questions.

Ms. Lovelady stated the report is very clear. Her question referred to the use of Unaffiliated judges and if there are still Republicans in the "pool." Ms. Stafford repeated how judges were assigned and stated that staff are exhausting efforts in case a vacancy occurs so that an appropriate replacement is assigned.

Ms. Lovelady asked about Early Voting. Ms. Stafford replied that the pool of Election Judges used for Election Day staff Early Voting days as well and will provide parity. Ms. Stafford reported that the assignments are perfectly balanced for Early Voting. Ms. Stafford added that Early Voting was balanced for the General in 2024. Ms. Stafford stated that it is a little easier to staff Early Voting.

Ms. Stafford stated that it is not fiscally responsible to staff 300 people as Election Judges. The purpose of having a large pool is to have individuals to pull from when judges drop or don't attend training or complete required paperwork. Having 140 Election Judges will provide Standby Judges and allows for ample staffing to ensure the polling places run smoothly with limited waiting.

Ms. Lovelady stated that Ms. Stafford did not answer her question. She added that Ms. Stafford is giving preference to Unaffiliated judges while there are Republicans who can fill the slots.

Ms. Stafford replied that that is not entirely true. Some polling places are staffed with an odd number of Election Judges.

Ms. Lovelady stated that Talbot County, again, like the 2024 Election, is not following the law. Ms. Stafford disagreed, stating that the law allows for the use of Unaffiliated judges in polling places staffed with 6 or more Election Judges and all polling places in Talbot County are staffed with more than 6 Election Judges. Ms. Lovelady stated that though you can, you don't have to (use Unaffiliated judges).

Ms. Lovelady then asked if all of the Election Judges assigned are in County. Ms. Stafford stated there are two Out of County, both Republican, and both returning judges.

Ms. Perry noticed that there appears to be less parity amongst Provisional Judges. She asked if it is helpful to "move up" experienced Voting Judges or is it better to train someone new? Ms. Stafford answered that staff do try to "move up" experienced judges when they are interested, but not everyone is willing to assume that responsibility.

Ms. Perry stated that she has noticed when observing at the polls the Chief Judges can assist Provisional Judges if there is a line. Ms. Stafford agreed and added that when not serving Provisional voters, these judges can help check-in voters at the polls.

Ms. MacKinnon expressed her appreciation for the efforts made to increase the Election Judge pool and the return rate of Election Judges. She asked Ms. Stafford if she has looked at the attrition rate of judges. Ms. Stafford responded that she continuously monitors and hopes to be able to fill vacancies as needed.

Mr. Irving asked if there are actual people associated with the "NEW" label on the Parity Report. Ms. Stafford replied that there are actual names of individuals assigned in the "RETURNER" and "NEW" slots on the report.

Mr. Irving asked if the Cordova polling place is large. Ms. Stafford replied yes. The Gubernatorial Primary turnout may not be as large as a Presidential Primary

but the staffing numbers allows for coverage for any dropouts or callouts on Election Day.

Mr. Irving asked about the pay for Standby Judges. Ms. Stafford stated that they get paid for the day at a lower rate. If they are called and work, they get paid the regular Election Judge rate for the assignment.

2. Approval of Appointments- Ms. MacKinnon asked for a motion to approve the appointment of 140 Election Judges as recommended and presented by the Director.

Mr. Irving made the motion and Ms. Perry seconded.

Ms. Lovelady asked if they would be getting a list of the names of the Election Judges. Ms. Ryan stated that there was a time during the last election that the Board discussed specific judges in closed session as a personnel matter. Ms. Stafford replied that the process has changed and the Board will no longer receive a list of names.

Ms. MacKinnon announced that there was a motion and a second to approve the appointment of 140 Election Judges as recommended and presented by the Director. Ms. Ryan added that the goal is to remain consistent with the party balance as presented in the Parity Report, to the extent practicable. The vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously by all members present; the appointments were approved.

B. Opens Meetings Act

1. Open Meetings Compliance Opinions- Ms. Ryan stated that she was circulating copies of 20 OMCB 15 and 19 OCM for the Board membership to sign as acknowledgment and fully execute.

Ms. Ryan provided an overview document which was posted and from which she read summarizing the complaints and the OMACB opinions.

Ms. Ryan emphasized that it is the preference of the Open Meetings Act that discussions happen in Open Sessions when possible.

Ms. Ryan added that the Board can have administrative meetings, which do not require an agenda or posting to the public, or a Closed session summary. Ms. Ryan suggests that the Board still post an agenda and do minutes as a failsafe.

Referring to Election Judges, Ms. Ryan stated that the Election Judges is not an administrative function of this Board. The Election Director makes the appointment subject to the approval of the Board. The Board can discuss qualifications/ performance of an individual Election Judge as a personnel matter under Closed Session, but not Election Judges as a whole.

The Board signed the two documents and Ms. Ryan will send the fully executed copies to the OMACB.

2. Compliance Procedures- Ms. Ryan provided and reviewed the following documents:

- Closing Statement Under the Open Meetings Act
- Compliance Checklist for Meetings Subject to the Maryland Open Meetings Act
- Template for Closed-Session Summary

Ms. Ryan stated that all Board members have taken the Open Meetings Act training; no Board member disagreed with this statement.

Ms. Ryan recommended that the Board Chair, Election Director, and the Board Attorney complete the forms for any Closed meetings together and post them with the Open Meeting documents. Any Board member can bring a topic to the Board Chair; the Board Chair and Attorney will determine if the discussion can be held in Open Meeting (preferable when possible) or Closed session.

DISCLOSURES

Ms. MacKinnon asked if any Board members had disclosures. One disclosure was made. Ms. MacKinnon announced she donated to the Democratic Forum in January 2026.

BOARD COMMENTS

Ms. MacKinnon announced that a Voter Registration List Maintenance handout was available for anyone who wanted a copy. She also stated that it was on the SBE website.

CONFIRMATION OF NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Board is scheduled for Wednesday, April 15, 2026, at 9:30 a.m. in the LBE meeting room.

CLOSED SESSION

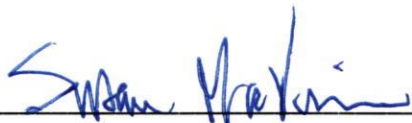
No Closed Session was held.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Perry motioned to adjourn the meeting and Ms. Lovelady seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by all members present. The meeting was adjourned at 10:48 am.

Minutes prepared by: Donna Kegley-Hacker

Attested,



Susan J. MacKinnon, President

Reviewed and submitted,



Gagy Irving III, Secretary



TALBOT COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
ELECTION DIRECTOR'S REPORT

March 18, 2026

Notice and Distribution of Materials

Meeting materials were prepared and mailed to Board Members, March 10, 2026.

The agenda and meeting materials for the February meeting were also posted on the Board of Elections web page and the entrances to the office and building at 215 Bay Street, Easton, MD, March 10, 2026.

Personnel

I have requested to hire for the Election Program Trainee Position. This is a contractual position. I am awaiting further information from Human Resources.

Meetings Attended:

I attended the monthly MAEO meeting and the meeting with SBE.

Donna and I attended the Maryland Disability Forum held at Fello Easton on Port Street. We were in attendance to demonstrate the Ballot Marking Device at the voter education workshop.

Correspondence:

Nothing to report.

Voter Registration Activities:

Monthly Statistical Report- The Report was distributed to board members in the monthly packet. As of March 6, 2026, there were 28, 867 active registered voters in Talbot County.

Voting System Activities:

We attended training for the Risk Limiting Audit and completed the pilot test.

Inventory is complete. We are at 100%.

A new fiber optic cable was installed in the office by the State and is operational.

Acceptance testing of ten new USB drives for the voting system is complete. The additional USB drives may be needed for the new RLA process.

The State will be getting new pollbooks and voting equipment for the 2028 Election Cycle.

Candidate Filing:

Candidate filing ended February 24, 2026. The deadline for Central Committees to nominate a candidate for vacancy was March 10, 2026. The list of local races can be found on our website. List of Candidates is available on the Maryland State Board of Elections website. There is a link to the list on the Talbot County Board of Elections website under Candidacy.

Precinct and Polling Issues:

Reminder letters to all polling places will be sent out in April.

Budget:

A report documenting Board of Elections Expenditures for FY2026 was included in your board packet.

There are no significant expenditures to report.

Other projects:

Nothing to report.

Upcoming Meetings/Events:

State Board of Elections Meetings:

Thursday, March 26, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.