

Minutes

Talbot County Board of Elections
215 Bay Street, Suite 7
Easton, MD 21601
November 15, 2023

Present:

Board

Susan MacKinnon, President (D)
Barbara H. Perry (D)
Denise Lovelady (R)

Staff

Tammy Stafford, Talbot County Election Director

Board Attorney

Lyndsey Ryan

Public Attending

Gary Judy
Mark Harrison
Mary Yancy
Steve Funderburk
Margel Highet

Public Comments

none

The monthly meeting of the Talbot County Board of Elections was held November 15, 2023, in the meeting room at the rear entrance of Suite 7 at the Board office indicated above. Ms. MacKinnon called the meeting to order at 9:37 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 October 18, copy of which board members had. Ms. Lovelady moved that the minutes be approved. Motion seconded and passed unanimously.

Additions/Changes to Agenda

Ms. Stafford said under New Business “B” should be added as Office of Legislative Audit Report. Ms. Perry moved to approve the agenda with the addition. It was seconded and passed unanimously.

Public Comments

none

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. Items in the report that were elaborated upon or discussed are as follows:

Personnel :

Staff evaluations are scheduled for December.

Meetings Attended:

- **MAEO Meeting October 27, 2023** was informative and addressed the challenges of COVID.
- **Talbot County Council Work session, October 30, 2023** concerning how to fill Board of Education vacancies. Ms. Lovelady asked if a decision had been reached and Ms. Stafford replied in the negative.

Voting System Activities:

- To comply with SBE requirement to complete pollbook battery testing by December 15, 2023, our battery backup testing was completed on November 14, 2023.

Precinct and Polling Issues:

- Cordova reached out to Ms. Stafford asking to wait on signing agreement until new officers are in place early in 2024. Ms. Stafford ask our attorney, Ms. Ryan if it is okay to wait. Her response was that existing officers can sign now and not wait for a new board.

Other Projects:

- **Voter Outreach** - Scout Troop 190, that was at Resource Day, had a fun and educational event with the election demonstration.
- **Open House-** Ms. Stafford handed out a press release about the event. Ms. Lovelady asked if Ms. Stafford hears that the County Council is planning on an award for Mr. Secrist’s service on the Board of Elections that she notify Richard Bullman so that he can attend.

Upcoming Meetings/Events:

- **MAEO Director/Deputy Mentor Meeting** – Tuesday, November 28, 2023, will be in Anne Arundel County.

Board Attorney's Report –

- During the Session for all Attorneys at the Biennial Meeting of Election Officials, October 19, 2023, these points were made:
- Single photos can be taken at Ballot Drop Boxes provided the person is 50 feet or more away. Groups cannot congregate and take photos.
- Firearms are not allowed in polling places.
- A question of when to call law enforcement if a person drops off more than one or two ballots at a Drop Box. Hard to prosecute since Intent of Ballot Stuffing difficult to prove if someone drops off more ballots.
- Oath Guide packets will be distributed again at canvasses to help canvassers when reviewing mail in ballots.

Old Business

- A. Facility for Election Office** – Nothing to report at this time. Will meet with County on Friday, November 20, 2023, about FY 2025 budget.
- B. By-Laws** – Ms. Stafford addressed the need to prepare the state document listing specific duties for the Board and for the Director. This should be attached to our By-Laws. May need a Special Meeting to complete the By-Laws.
- C. Job Description for Election Director** – The Board completed the Job Description. Ms. Perry moved that it be approved as completed. Motion seconded and approved unanimously. Ms. MacKinnon and Ms. Stafford will sign it after the meeting. This will be used when doing Election Director evaluations in a Closed Session in December 2023.

New Business

A. Biennial Conference –

- All attendees felt it was beneficial but some parts may have been redundant if you had heard the information before. Ms. Stafford stated the Election Directors' session was beneficial in dealing with the media and public comments. Had good feedback from other directors.

- Ms. MacKinnon said it was good seeing the new state officials. The session on rules for Board members was clear and the AI and security sessions were beneficial.

B. Office of Legislative Audit Report - A copy of the article from the Star Democrat concerning the audit was given to Board members and is attached to these minutes. Any questions concerning this audit should be directed to the SBE.

Confirmation of next meeting

Ms. MacKinnon mentioned that the next meeting, December 20, 2023, would be very close to Christmas and asked if we should move it. Ms. Perry moved to have the next meeting on December 13, 2023. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. The next regular scheduled meeting of the Board of Elections will be on December 13, 2023, at 9:30 a.m.

Closed Session – The Board entered closed session at 10:09 a.m. to discuss a security issue.

The Board met in closed session from 10:09 to 10:22 to discuss public security which would put risk to the public or election process. No decisions were made.

Adjournment

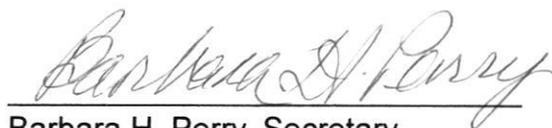
Ms. Lovelady moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 10:23 a.m.

Attested,

Respectfully submitted,



Susan MacKinnon



Barbara H. Perry, Secretary

11/9/2023

THE STAR DEMOCRAT

STATE

Elections Board audit finds ineligible voters, security issues

TOMMY TUCKER
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS — An audit released Friday found that the Maryland Board of Elections did not report for more than a year its findings that people voted or tried to vote more than once in the 2020 general election — well after the results were certified, according to The Office of Legislative Audits.

The state elections board identified 134 voters who voted more than once and 1,371 voters who attempted to vote multiple times in the 2020 general election, but it did not report these individuals to the The Office of State Prosecutor until April 2022, the audit said. The audit is part of a routine physical compliance audit of the SBE conducted every three to four years.

“Definitely the (reports) for the 2020 general election were significantly late and I think they indicated that was due to staff turnover within their office,”

said Matthew Streett, an assistant director for the Compliance and Performance Audit Division of the OLA. “They reported them after the election results were certified.”

In the July 2022 primary election, the audit found, the elections board identified four individuals who successfully voted multiple times and 263 voters who attempted to vote multiple times, referring the information to the state prosecutors office in a “timely” manner.

Election integrity has become a high-profile issue with former President Donald Trump and his supporters repeatedly challenging the outcome of the 2020 presidential election.

The audit also noted that the elections board could enhance its procedures to fully identify deceased or duplicate voters. The audit identified 2,426 “potentially deceased individuals” whose voter registrations were active and 327 individuals with potential duplicate voter registrations.

“We’re just pointing out areas where they can improve,” said Streett. “The information they’re getting from the Maryland Department of Health was not fully complete and accurate, so they were missing out on a certain pocket of deceased individuals.”

The Health Department could not be reached for comment on Friday.

The audit also found deficiencies with the state elections board’s security and control over its information systems, but did not go into detail for security reasons. The department’s response to those concerns also was redacted from the report.

The elections board did agree to implement the recommendations, but disagreed with several findings.

The State Board of Elections could not be reached for comment on Friday. The current Elections Administrator Jared DeMarinis took the helm in June 2023 after longtime administrator Linda Lamone retired.

TALBOT COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
ELECTION DIRECTOR'S REPORT

November 15, 2023

Notice and Distribution of Materials

Meeting materials were prepared and mailed to Board Members November 7, 2023.

The Agenda for the November meeting was posted on the Board of Elections office door and in the entrance of the building, as well as, to the website November 7, 2023.

Personnel: Performance evaluations will be conducted in December.

Meetings Attended:

MAEO Director/Deputy Mentor meeting - MAEO has formed a new mentorship program for Directors and Deputies. It brings together all of the directors and deputies from across the state to This was the first meeting of the group.

MAEO Meeting, October 27, 2023 – The meeting was held at the Anne Arundel County office. Because 2024 is an election year, next year's MAEO conference will be a one-day event held at a metro area local board office. After the meeting there was a screening of the documentary titled "No Time to Fail." It followed election workers in Maine during the 2020 Presidential Election Cycle.

Talbot County Council Work session, October 30, 2023 – I attended a work session for the proposed legislation to change the way vacancies are filled on the Board of Education. I was there to provide information on the resources that our office would need based on the proposed legislation.

Correspondence:

Nothing to report

Voter Registration Activities:

Monthly Statistical Report- The Report was distributed to board members in the monthly packet. As of October 31, 2023 there were 28, 767 active registered voters in Talbot County and 1,475 Inactive voters, for a total voter count of 30, 242.

Voting System Activities:

The charging cycle was completed for the pollbooks, scanners and BMDs as of November 6, 2023.

SBE required pollbook battery testing that is to be completed by December 15, 2023. We will have it completed well before that deadline.

We have upgraded some of the security in the election equipment area.

Candidate Filing:

Candidate filing is open. The deadline to file for candidacy is February 9, 2024 at 9 p.m. The local offices on the ballot are Board of Education Districts 2, 5, 6. No one has filed at this time.

Precinct and Polling Issues:

Election Judge Recruitment- Election Judge numbers as of November 7, 2023 are 133 committed. Of those committed, there are 76 Democratic; 46 Republican; and 11 Unaffiliated/Other.

We have 83 returning Judges from the 2022 General Election and 50 new judges. We will continue to take applications even after our goal is met.

Budget:

A report documenting Board of Elections Expenditures for FY 2024 as of November 11, 2023 were included in the Board's packets.

Other projects:

Voter Outreach – Troop 190 met in our meeting room, November 8, 2023. Staff was on hand to answer questions about the election process. During the meeting, troop members participated in a demonstration election.

Open House- We held an Open House, Wednesday, October 18, 2023, from 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. We had about 60 people attend. In attendance were County Council members, County Staff, state legislators, new and returning election judges and interested voters.

Upcoming Meetings/Events:

Election Director Meeting - Thursday, November 16, 2023 at SBE.

MAEO Director/Deputy Mentor Meeting – Wednesday, November 29, 2023 at Baltimore County.