

## **Minutes**

Talbot County Board of Elections  
215 Bay Street, Easton, MD 21601  
Conference Room 1

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

### **Present:**

#### Board

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

#### Staff

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

#### Board Attorney

Lyndsey Ryan

#### Members of the Public

Gary Judy, Citizen  
Terrence Bernard, Citizen  
Sally Akridge, League of Women Voters of Mid-Shore, Inc. & Citizen  
Mary Jordan, via Google Meets

### **DECLARATION OF QUORUM PRESENT**

Ms. MacKinnon called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m. She welcomed the public, announced that a sign-in sheet and copies of the agenda were available, and reviewed key elements of the Public Comment protocols, which are also listed in the next to the last paragraph on the agenda.

With all members in attendance, Ms. MacKinnon declared that a quorum was present. She then invited Mr. Bernard to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **APPROVAL OF OPEN MINUTES- 01/15/2025 and 02/19/2025**

Minutes from the Open Meetings held 01/15/2025 and 02/19/2025 were mailed in Board packets to members, allowing for review prior to this meeting. Ms. MacKinnon called for any

corrections to the minutes. There were none. Mr. Black motioned to accept the minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Mr. Irving. The motion passed unanimously by all members present.

#### **CHANGES TO THE AGENDA**

Ms. MacKinnon announced one addition to the agenda. Under 11. New Business D. Election of a New Board Secretary was added. Ms. MacKinnon asked if there were any additional changes to the agenda. There were none.

#### **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Ms. MacKinnon asked if there was a motion to approve the agenda. Ms. Perry motioned to approve the agenda with the one addition. Ms. Lovelady seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by all members present.

Ms. MacKinnon stated that she wanted to acknowledge the loss of a significant person to our Local Board, who had been involved with Elections at least since 2008, Mr. Jim Butts. Ms. MacKinnon then invited Mr. Gleockler to say a few words about Mr. Butts.

Mr. Gleockler spoke of Mr. Butts, 81 years of age, as a valued coworker and friend. He stated that Mr. Butts was very knowledgeable, a good worker, and an "expert" on the pollbooks. He added that during the 2024 Election Cycle he worked both elections and canvasses during his illness. Mr. Gleockler stated that his passing is a big loss and he will miss him.

Ms. MacKinnon opened the floor for comments from the Board. Mr. Black added that he had worked with Mr. Butts and found him very capable and very committed.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Ms. MacKinnon opened the floor for public comments.

Mr. Bernard distributed a single page document about the meaning of the Pledge of Allegiance. When another member of the public, Ms. Akridge, asked for the source of the document, Mr. Bernard replied that he had no desire to respond to her.

#### **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 highlighted all key areas of the report including Personnel, Meetings Attended, Correspondence, and Voter Registration Activities. When discussing Voting System Activities, she added that the manual audit on 02/04/2025 was completed using teams from Caroline, Dorchester, Queen Anne's, and Wicomico counties local board staff, as well as the Talbot staff.

Ms. Stafford also discussed Candidate Filing and Precinct Polling Issues. Ms. Stafford informed the Board that the polling place that was damaged during the 2024 Election Cycle (Community United Methodist Church in Royal Oak) will not be pursuing payment for repairs but would accept a donation. Ms. Stafford stated that the contract with polling places includes a rental fee that the LBE pays and states that the polling place is responsible for any damages incurred. Ms. Stafford announced that the church has assured her that the LBE can continue to use their location as a polling place for future elections.

Ms. Perry asked that should Community United Methodist Church no longer be a polling place, what other options are possible in Royal Oak. Mr. Black and Ms. Stafford replied that there weren't really any other options. Ms. Stafford added that the consolidation of polling places might be the only option should the church no longer be available.

Ms. Stafford went on to highlight that the budget report was included in the mailed packet. She added that the County FY 2026 budget deliberations will continue at least into April.

Ms. Stafford announced that there are three Talbot municipal elections in the upcoming months; Easton, Trappe, and Oxford. Though the LBE does not administer municipal elections, staff do assist with voter registration information.

#### **BOARD ATTORNEY'S REPORT**

Ms. Ryan stated that she had nothing to report.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

##### **A. Facility for the Election Office**

1. New and Existing Space Plans- Ms. Stafford reported that when she and Board Chair Ms. MacKinnon attended the County FY 2026 budget meeting in February, they were informed that the LBE could be in the existing space for the next 2-3 years. Ms. Stafford has been thinking about ways to better use the existing space but there are no concrete plans at this time. She is reviewing feedback from the 2024 Election Cycle.
2. New Regulations for Warehouse Space- Ms. Stafford also stated that SBE has drafted new regulations for Warehouse space requirements. The public comment period has passed and these may be approved in the near future. SBE will be accessing all LBE warehouses to determine if they have adequate space and then will make recommendations.

Mr. Black asked that if it is determined that our Warehouse space is insufficient, what happens? Ms. Stafford stated that this would require additional County discussions and could be a lengthy process. Mr. Black asked if it was possible that the

Warehouse would be off site again. Ms. Stafford replied that the goal would be to keep the office space and Warehouse space together in one location.

**B. FY 2026 Budget**

Ms. Stafford stated that the FY 2026 budget request has been submitted to the County. The process is slightly different this year, with County staff presenting to the County Council, instead of Department Heads.

Ms. Lovelady asked if there was a special request included in our proposal. Ms. Stafford replied that no special request was submitted.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Legislative Update**

In response to the Board's request at the previous meeting, Ms. Ryan verbally presented on some of the pending legislation. Ms. Ryan stated that she is highlighting legislation that appears to be moving forward.

SB377/ HB412- copies included in the mailed Board packet. This proposed legislation focuses on Open Meeting requirements and includes posting of agendas and support documents, live streaming of meetings, and archiving the video for at least 5 years. It is scheduled for another hearing on 03/25/25 at 1 p.m.

Ms. MacKinnon asked if this proposed legislation is anticipated to pass. Ms. Ryan replied that it appeared that way since amendments removed the suggested canvass requirements.

Ms. MacKinnon asked about the time frame for implementation if it passes. Ms. Stafford read aloud the portion of the bill that refers to the adoption of regulations by SBE on or before 12/01/2025, with the Act taking affect 06/01/2025.

HB317- The focus of this proposed legislation is Curbside Voting. It proposes a pilot program, with 1 small LBE, 1 medium size LBE, and 1 large size LBE.

Ms. Lovelady asked if we would have to have a booth, similar to a drive-thru? Ms. Ryan summarized that the opportunity to vote would be curbside and that it would be open to all voters, though the intent is to better serve those with disabilities.

HB426/ SB313- This proposed legislation is about Tabulation Audits- Risk-Limiting Audits. This does not look like it will pass but it is being watched.

HB153- The focus on this pending legislation is Voter Registration- Age and Notification to Minors. Ms. Ryan stated that the proposal is to lower the voter registration age from 16 years of age to 15 years and 9 months. Ms. Ryan added this might create additional work for the office staff but Ms. Stafford stated that the impact would be minimal.

HB945/ SB645- This pending legislation relates to the Gubernatorial Primary Election-Date and proposes to change the Primary in Gubernatorial Elections years from the fifth Tuesday to the fourth Tuesday.

Ms. Stafford added that, in addition, SBE has four departmental bills currently being considered this session; one relates to Election plans that basically would require that they be submitted as one complete package rather than in individual pieces at different times.

Ms. Stafford also stated that Curbside Voting and Risk Limiting Audits have been before the legislators in previous sessions and SBE and LBEs will continue to watch these. She added that a complete audit is already conducted; a risk-limiting audit would be an additional requirement if passed.

#### B. Streaming of Meetings

Ms. MacKinnon reviewed that the Board had a work session in February 2025 focused on their meetings, including streaming of Open Meetings. She suggested that any additional work sessions be tabled for the time being since current legislation, if passed, would be impactful.

Ms. Ryan suggested that the discussion be tabled until the legislative session is completed in April 2025.

Ms. Lovelady asked that, in anticipation of possible legislation, if SBE had offered any guidance to the LBEs pertaining to streaming of their open meetings. Ms. Stafford replied that guidance has not yet been supplied.

Ms. Lovelady asked if the LBE budget is flexible to be able to cover any costs related to implementing streaming of open meetings. Ms. Stafford replied that she did not anticipate needing to adjust the budget.

Ms. MacKinnon asked if there was a motion to table the discussion on streaming Board meetings until after the legislative session concludes. Mr. Black made this motion. Ms. Perry seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by all members present.

#### C. 2025 Biennial/ MAEO Conference

Ms. Stafford announced that information about the 2025 Biennial/ MAEO Conference was included in the Board packets that were mailed. She stated that, following this meeting, she would find out from each Board Member and the Board Attorney their plans for attending. She reminded everyone that the Biennial is required to be attended by Board Members & the Board Attorney and is being held May 4 & 5, 2025. The MAEO Conference is May 6-8, 2025. Though the MAEO Conference does not have any sessions that are specifically for the Board or Attorney, they are welcome to attend.

Ms. MacKinnon asked how arrangements for attendance are made. Ms. Stafford replied that she hopes to submit conference & hotel registration for all Talbot LBE attendees this week.

**D. Election of Board Secretary**

Ms. MacKinnon announced that the current Secretary has resigned from the position. Board members thanked Ms. Perry for her service. Staff member Donna Kegley-Hacker is taking the minutes for this meeting.

Board Attorney Ms. Ryan reviewed what the current bylaws state regarding the Secretary.

Ms. MacKinnon asked if there was someone on the Board willing to serve as the Secretary. Hearing no immediate response, Ms. MacKinnon asked if it was possible to have staff draft the meeting minutes.

Ms. Ryan reviewed the bylaws again.

Ms. Lovelady asked if it would be within the bylaws to have staff prepare the minutes and then have a Board Secretary review the document for accuracy before sending them in Board packets for review. Mr. Irving stated that he would be happy to do this (the review process).

Ms. Ryan stated that would be allowable within the current bylaws.

Ms. Perry motioned that Mr. Irving serve as the new Board Secretary with the staff (Donna Kegley-Hacker) drafting the meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Black. The motion passed unanimously by all members present.

**DISCLOSURES**

Ms. MacKinnon asked if there were any Board disclosures to report.



Ms. Lovelady stated that she sent her disclosure/s to the members; they verbally verified receipt. No other disclosures were announced.

#### **CONFIRMATION OF NEXT MEETING**

Ms. MacKinnon asked Ms. Stafford if there was any pending business for the Board that would require meeting in April 2025. Ms. Stafford replied that there are no pressing items for April at this time.

Ms. MacKinnon then suggested that the next regular meeting of the Board would be held on Wednesday, May 21, 2025, at 9:30 a.m. Ms. Perry made the formal motion. Mr. Irving seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by all members present.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Black motioned to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Perry. The motion passed unanimously by all members present. The meeting was adjourned at 10:17 a.m.

Minutes prepared by: Donna Kegley-Hacker

Attested,

Reviewed and submitted,

  
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Susan J. MacKinnon, President

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Gudy Irving III, Secretary

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

March 19, 2025

**Notice and Distribution of Materials**

Meeting materials were prepared and mailed to Board Members, March 11, 2025.

The Agenda for the March meeting was posted on the Board of Elections web page the entrance to the office, and entrances of the building at 215 Bay Street 4, March 11, 2025.

**Personnel:**

We are sad to announce that Jim Butts passed away March 3, 2025. He was 81. Jim served every election cycle since at least 2006 for the MD SBE as a contract trainer and as a County Tech throughout the Eastern Shore counties of Maryland. He worked at the Talbot County Board of Elections from 2014 to 2024.

Jim was the resident expert on pollbooks. He was always willing to share his vast knowledge on election equipment and election judge training, helping to ensure the success of elections in Talbot County. His kind spirit and contribution to ensuring the success of Talbot County Elections will be missed.

Our office received an invitation to join in monthly trainings and team building events from the Baltimore County Board of election. The events will be held virtually and in person. Our office will be participating in the events.

Staff also assisted Caroline, Wicomico, and Worcester in completing their manual audits in February.

**Meetings Attended:**

For January and February, I attended monthly meetings with SBE and MAEO, as well as, meeting for the MAEO Personnel and Legislative Committees.

Ms. MacKinnon and I attended a budget meeting with County Staff in February.

**Correspondence:**

Nothing to report at this time.

**Voter Registration Activities:**

**Monthly Statistical Report-** The Report was distributed to board members in the monthly packet. As of March 11, 2025, there were 28,786 active registered voters in Talbot County.



### **Voting System Activities:**

We completed the manual audit February 4 with no variances between the voting system and the manual tabulation.

Post-election maintenance on the pollbooks is completed. The PEM on the voting equipment is ongoing and will be completed before the deadline of April 24, 2025.

Inventory is 99.73% completed. We have one outstanding inventory item to reconcile when PEM is completed. The deadline for the completion of inventory is June 30, 2025.

### **Candidate Filing:**

Candidate filing began February 25, 2025 for the 2026 Gubernatorial Election cycle. The deadline to file is February 24, 2025. The list of local races can be found on our website. At this time, we have had one person inquire about running.

### **Precinct and Polling Issues:**

I was contacted by Terry Matthews from United Methodist Church, which is the polling place in Royal Oak, about damage to the floor caused when delivering equipment for the Primary Election. United Methodist Church wants to replace the floor and inquired as to whether we would be willing to pay for the replacement. I am awaiting clarification on the extent of the replacement the church wants the LBE to cover and an estimate of the cost.

### **Budget:**

A report documenting Board of Elections Expenditures for FY 2025 was included in your board packet.

The FY2026 budget was submitted to the Talbot County Finance office and a meeting to discuss the budget was held with the Department of Finance and the County Manager. The Talbot County Council held deliberations on the budget March 11 and March 13.

### **Other projects:**

Staff is creating a schedule for voter outreach events for 2025.

### **Upcoming Meetings/Events:**

State Board of Elections Meeting, Thursday, March 27, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.

Biennial/MAEO Conference May 4 to May 9, 2025 in Ocean City, MD.