

Minutes

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

Wednesday, October 15, 2025

Present:

Board

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

Board Attorney

Lyndsey Ryan

Staff

Tammy Stafford, Election Director
Fred Gleockler, Election Program IT Specialist II

Members of the Public

Larry Schuyler, Public
Terrence Bernard, Citizen
Gary Judy, Citizen
Mark Harrison, Citizen
Shari Wilcoxon, Citizen
Mary Yancey
Wes Hagood, Citizen

Absent/Excused:

Staff

Donna Kegley-Hacker, Election Program Manager II

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. MacKinnon called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

DECLARATION OF QUORUM PRESENT

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by those in attendance. Mr. Gleockler and Ms. Stafford confirmed that the live streaming was working.

With all Board members in attendance, Ms. MacKinnon declared that a quorum was present.

CLOSED MEETING SUMMARY

Ms. Ryan reminded Ms. MacKinnon that there was an addition to the agenda of a Closed Meeting Summary.

Ms. MacKinnon asked Board Attorney Ms. Ryan to give the summary of the closed meeting. Ms. Ryan announced that the Board met in a closed meeting on August 08, 2025, from 10:12 a.m.- 10:21 a.m. to discuss a personnel matter regarding a specific employee and to approve closed meeting minutes from July 16, 2025, and August 12, 2025. Ms. Ryan stated that the only decision made at that meeting was the approval of these minutes.

Mr. Irving and Ms. MacKinnon clarified that the closed meeting was held September 8, 2025, not August 8, 2025, as Ms. Ryan stated. Ms. Ryan concurred.

APPROVAL OF OPEN MINUTES- 09/08/2025 Open Board Meeting

Minutes from the Open Board Meeting held on 09/08/25 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.

Ms. Perry stated that on page 6 under Board Comments, Ms. Black should be corrected to Mr. Black.

A motion to approve the minutes with this one correction was made by Mr. Black and seconded by Ms. Perry. The motion passed unanimously by all members present.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

Ms. MacKinnon announced that the agenda was posted, and the Board had already addressed an addition of the Closed Meeting Summary. She asked if there were any additional changes to the agenda.

Ms. Perry stated that the 09/08/25 minutes reflected that Board Comments would be added to future meeting agendas, and she did not see it added to today's agenda. Ms. MacKinnon agreed that it should be on the agenda. Ms. Ryan stated that they should run the business of the meeting and then have Board Comments towards the end in case anything pertinent arises during the meeting.

Ms. Perry clarified that Board Comments should be after Disclosures on the agenda. Ms. Ryan agreed. Ms. MacKinnon stated that Board Comments would be added to today's agenda, following Disclosures.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. MacKinnon, with assistance from Ms. Stafford, announced that the agenda included a link to the Board's Public Comment Protocols and Procedures, which were passed at the last meeting. These were also attached to the copies of the agenda available at today's meeting.

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

1. Mr. Harrison stated that the Department of Justice made a formal request to the State Board of Elections. He added that, "as the county Local Board of Elections, we want you to notify the MD State Board of Elections that we, the people, want them to respond to the request. It is a matter of law that they do so".
2. Mr. Judy spoke on the news reports about the Superintendent of Des Moines who was arrested as an illegal alien, stating it was discovered he had previously been registered as a Democrat in MD. He stated that the process is undermined, and "our fundamental rights of fair and secure elections are violated". Mr. Judy added that last month he pointed out the unjust violation of Election Judge parity and now this. He then asked several questions and concluded by stating that, "as the Talbot County election representatives you (this Board) must demand that the State Board of Elections, without further hesitation, honor the request of the DOJ".
3. Ms. Wilcoxon read from the Board approved Public Comment Protocols. She then referred to a Supreme Court decision (1964) and the First Amendment protection of rights of citizens to criticize public officials. She stated that the Director and Board Chair were rude and had threatened citizens herself, Lori Stepp, and Frank Gunsallus but this was prior to the live streaming of meetings, and the minutes did not reflect this. She ended by stating that the Board should rework the protocols to properly reflect the laws of the country.
4. Mr. Bernard referred to the closed meeting summary and questioned the definitions of personnel and employee (Director only or does this include Board members and are employees State employees or County employees).
5. Ms. Yancey stated that she was not aware of the request from the DOJ to access our voter rolls. She added that, "if this is the case, I encourage you as representatives of the Board of Elections to follow the guidance of the Attorney General".

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.

Ms. Perry asked Ms. Stafford if she knew where she would be set up at the Community Resource Fair. Ms. Stafford replied that she did not.

One correction was made. Mr. Black asked if Under Budget- the expenditures were for FY 2026 (not 2025 as typed). Ms. Stafford verified that the expenditures were for FY 2026.

Ms. Stafford stated that planning for the FY 2027 budget is underway.

Mr. Black asked about the Election Judge (EJ) interest numbers. Ms. Stafford stated that historically EJ interest from one main political party is higher than the other. The LBE has worked to increase the numbers and the LBE has seen an increase since 2023 and had a very good turnout in 2024. There has been a lot of attention on Election Judges.

Ms. Stafford reminded everyone that completing the interest form does not guarantee assignment but that the LBE tries to staff the polling places as party balanced as possible.

Ms. Lovelady questioned why the LBE considers unaffiliated voters as Election Judges in the Primary when they can't vote in the Primary. She added that since there is a large interest from the two major political parties why not just use Democratic and Republican as judges.

Ms. Stafford reminded everyone that in 2020, with COVID, the State used Vote Centers, and this cut the need for Election Judges in half. The LBE has been trying to rebuild that pool. She stated that in addition many of our Election Judges are older and will begin to age out. She reminded the Board that the Legislators have put incentives into place for returning Election Judges; we have over 80% of our people returning and we want to keep that continuity and experience in our polling places.

Ms. Lovelady again questioned the use of unaffiliated voters as Election Judges in the Primary.

Ms. Stafford replied that we use them because, in most cases, we do not have enough Election Judges from the two major political parties to staff the polls.

Ms. Lovelady stated that may have been the case in the past, but you now have a more extensive list of interested people wanting to be judges and it is something to consider.

Ms. Stafford said that while this is the case, we also need to look at the different polling place locations and try to work Election Judges as close to their home precincts as possible.

Ms. Lovelady again questioned why the LBE uses unaffiliated voters as Election Judges during the Primary if they cannot vote in the Primary.

Ms. Stafford reminded everyone that the party affiliation of the Election Judges does not affect the outcome of the election.

Ms. Lovelady emphasized that she thinks that the LBE should be using Democratic and Republican voters as election judges since there is a large interest pool. She stated that while it is nice to have experienced judges, the Chief Judges should be able to handle any problems that arise.

Ms. Perry asked if excluding unaffiliated voters as judges during the primary might make them not want to serve as a judge in the general (referring to returning judges).

Ms. Stafford stated this is a possibility. She reminded everyone that we are nine months out and we will be determining our needs for the upcoming election. It is fluid and ever changing. She added that we are in the early stages of the process and can reevaluate.

BOARD ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Ms. Ryan presented an opinion from the State of Maryland's Open Meetings Compliance Board. (She mentioned this at the previous meeting and stated that she would give a more detailed report at this meeting.) The Open Meetings Compliance Board received a complaint that 17 Local Boards of Elections, including Talbot, violated the Open Meetings Act by not posting online the minutes from their canvas meetings. The compliance board reviewed responses and ruled that the board of canvassers are carrying out an administrative function by administering state election law and this falls outside of the Open Meetings Act. Ms. Ryan read the full response; there was no violation.

In addition, a specific complaint against Talbot alleged violation of the act by failing to post minutes from regular meetings held in January and February 2025. The compliance board responded that the Open Meetings Act requires minutes to be prepared and posted as soon as practicable. The compliance board found no violation but suggested that minutes be posted without signature as the requirement is only that they be approved. Ms. Ryan read the full response; there was no violation.

Ms. Ryan announced that on 10/17/25 two additional complaints were received alleging Open Meetings Act violations. She reported that she has not had the chance to review these, but she will send them and her responses once she has compiled them.

Mr. Irving asked if the board attorney was able to say the source of the two allegations.

Ms. Ryan responded that the complaints came from an individual from another county.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Facility for the Election Office

Ms. Stafford stated that she had no updates for this meeting.

Ms. MacKinnon stated that she wants to keep this topic on the agenda because she wants to make sure it stays on the Board's and the County's radar so that it is not forgotten; space is going to be a problem in the future.

B. Email Correspondence

Ms. MacKinnon stated that the director is requesting clarification on how to respond to emails that are addressed to specific board members, when the emails are not related to board business or everyday activities. Ms. Stafford is asking the board for guidance.

Ms. Stafford stated that she occasionally receives emails that are more vendor related and addressed to an individual board member but not related to board business.

Ms. Perry asked if the e-mail is being sent specifically to one of Board members' names, but it is not for board business, to which Ms. Stafford replied yes.

Ms. Perry replied that she would suggest that the e-mail be forwarded to the addressee stating that it is not something that is Board business and ask that they respond to Ms. Stafford that she should handle it.

Ms. Lovelady added that this is not a large volume of emails, it's just every so often. Ms. Stafford agreed that it is not a large volume of emails.

Ms. Lovelady suggested that the emails be forwarded to the addressee, emphasizing that if an e-mail is addressed to an individual, it should be sent to the individual.

Miss Perry agreed. There were no other Board comments regarding this matter.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Polling Place Assignments

All documents were mailed in the Board packets and were posted on the LBE website.

Ms. MacKinnon reminded the Board that they approved the 2026 polling place assignments at the 09/08/2025 meeting.

Ms. Stafford informed the Board that the document included in the packet is a compilation of the locations of the polling places and voter density of the areas. It also includes Early Voting and Ballot Drop Box locations. She added that all polling places meet the State requirements and are accessible to voters.

Ms. Stafford reminded the Board that at the last meeting there was a concern about traffic crossing Route 50 to access the Talbot County Community Center (01005). Ms. Stafford stated that the polling place can be reached also by travelling to Longwoods or Hiners Ln and that there is information available to the public about the new entrance at this location.

Another concern expressed at the last meeting was about public transportation. Ms. Stafford stated that if a polling place is not on an established route, a voter may request a stop be added.

Ms. MacKinnon asked if this was possible for any polling place. Ms. Stafford replied that Delmarva Community Transit posts the routes on their website and voters can ask for a specific stop if it is along the route.

Ms. MacKinnon expressed concern about the construction and roadwork near the Community Center and the possible impact on voters.

Ms. Ryan stated that the front entrance is going to be closed. The public will enter by a traffic light at Airport Rd. Ms. Perry added that there are signs for drivers.

Ms. MacKinnon stated that it sounded like it was a relatively easy and visible route. Ms. Ryan agreed, adding that there are signs and flashing lights.

Ms. Stafford reminded the Board that the road to this polling place was closed during the 2024 General Election. The LBE worked with the County to make sure there was plenty of signage. The LBE also sent postcards to voters in that precinct with a map of the traffic pattern and will consider doing something similar for 2026.

Ms. Stafford announced that Mr. Gleockler provided her with additional information about public transportation. She stated that polling places in Cordova, New St. John's, and Tilghman will not have public transportation access without special request, which requires the provider's approval.

Ms. Stafford also announced that a map of the precincts is available for anyone who would like to look at it.

DISCLOSURES

Ms. MacKinnon stated two Board members (Ms. MacKinnon and Ms. Perry) made disclosures; these were emailed to the Board members.

NEW BUSINESS (Out of Order)

Ms. Stafford reminded the Board that she needed a vote on the proposed Polling Place Plan just discussed.

Mr. Irving motioned to approve the proposed 2026 Polling Place Plan. Ms. Perry seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by all members present.

BOARD COMMENTS

There were no Board comments made.

CONFIRMATION OF NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Board is scheduled for Wednesday, November 19, 2025, at 9:30 a.m. in the LBE meeting room.

Ms. Lovelady asked if the meetings would continue to be held in the LBE room. Ms. Stafford stated that that would be the case until further notice. She added that it was easier to keep the livestream equipment in one location rather than move it back and forth.

CLOSED SESSION

Ms. MacKinnon announced that the Board would be going into Closed Session.

Ms. Ryan stated that the Closed Session was for a personnel matter to discuss a specific individual.

Mr. Black motioned to go into closed session. Mr. Irving seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously by all members present.

The Board met in closed session beginning at 10:21 a.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board did not return from closed session. A statement about the Closed Session will be provided at the next Open Meeting.

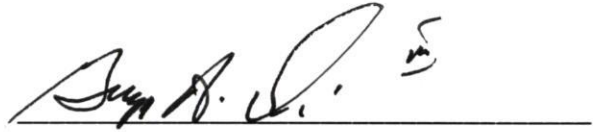
Minutes prepared by: Donna Kegley-Hacker

Attested,



Susan J. MacKinnon, President

Reviewed and submitted,



Gudy Irving III, Secretary

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

October 15, 2025

Notice and Distribution of Materials

Meeting materials were prepared and mailed to Board Members, October 6, 2025.

The agenda and meeting materials for the October 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, October 6, 2025.

Personnel

I am looking into reclassifying a PIN to Deputy Director. This is an effort to reorganize the staffing we have in the office. This will not add to the number of current positions.

Meetings Attended:

I also attended the monthly meetings with SBE and MAEO.

Correspondence:

A press release dated September 30, 2025, from the Maryland State Board of Elections was included in your packet for the Board's information.

We received the Comprehensive Audit results for the 2024 Election Cycle. A response has been submitted to the Maryland State Board of Elections.

Voter Registration Activities:

Monthly Statistical Report- The Report was distributed to board members in the monthly packet. As of October 15, 2025, there were 28,806 active registered voters in Talbot County.

Voting System Activities:

CMOS batteries were replaced in all scanners and ballot marking devices on September 16.

The charging cycle for the scanners and marking devices, as well as the UPSs is complete.

Candidate Filing:

Candidate filing began February 25, 2025, for the 2026 Gubernatorial Election cycle. The deadline to file is February 24, 2026. The list of local races can be found on our website.

Precinct and Polling Issues:

Site visits and reviews of the Accessibility Surveys, signal and outlet testing for 8 of the 10 polling places have been conducted.

We have received contracts back from five of the locations assigned as polling places for the 2026 Election Cycle.

The Election Judge Interest Application was sent to the voters who have contacted our office to serve as an election judge for the 2026 election cycle on October 2, 2025.

311 applications were sent out. 145 were Democratic, 115 Republican, 49 Other, and 2 undetermined.

Budget:

A report documenting Board of Elections Expenditures for FY2025 was included in your board packet.

Planning for the 2027 Budget is underway.

Other projects:

We held a voter education and registration event at the Easton Branch of the Talbot County Board of Elections for National Voter Education Week.

October 18, 2025, we will be attending the Community Resource Fair at Easton Elementary School.

Upcoming Meetings/Events:

State Board of Elections Meeting, Thursday, October 23, 2025, at 2:00 p.m.