

BOARD MEETING
BALTIMORE CITY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
SEPTEMBER 19, 2024

The meeting of the Baltimore City Board of Elections was held at the Baltimore City Board of Elections Office at 417 E Fayette Street, Baltimore, MD 21212

IN ATTENDANCE:

BOARD MEMBERS

Terrence Threweatt Jr, Board Vice President
Sam Novey, Board Secretary
Hope Williams, Board Member
Maria Vismale, Board Member
Scherod Barnes, Board President

STAFF

Armstead B.C. Jones, Election Director
Abigail Goldman, Deputy Election Director

GUESTS

Andrea Schedler, Representative of Delegate Embry

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Scherod Barnes, Board President, at 4:08 pm and a quorum was declared. Mr. Novey moved to accept the minutes of the August 15, 2024 meeting. Mr. Threweatt seconded. The motion passed.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Novey moved to accept the agenda. Mr. Threweatt seconded. The motion passed.

Mr. Barnes acknowledged the presence of Andrea Schedler, representative of Delegate Elizabeth Embry, at the meeting.

PRESIDENT REMARKS

Mr. Barnes shared that with 47 days until election day he asked that everyone help as needed to make the election a success. He asked the director and deputy director to inform board members in a timely way of all needs related to the election. He asked all board members to follow up on the request from Deputy Director Goldman for all board members to fill out a smartsheet document to indicate availability for the mail-ballot and provisional ballot canvass.

Mr. Barnes requested that all board members inform him and other board members about any media appearances and communications with the state board of elections.

Mr. Barnes disclosed that he made political donations to attend the Baltimore City Democratic Party's Blue Wave Affairs and to Delegate N. Scott Philips to attend his fundraiser.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Mr. Jones shared that the office is gearing up for the election. He shared that the team had trained 669 judges. The trainings will continue at the forum until the end of the month and then they will be moving to Mount Pleasant. He shared that the Mt Pleasant location has been popular.

Mr. Jones shared that many new judges are coming in. He said that approximately 4,000 people have applied to be new judges and that staff are working with those new judges to get people to call in and schedule for training. He also shared that judges are returning as well.

Mr. Jones shared his goal of getting 2,500 - 2,700 judges trained and have a reserve group of ~250 election judges who can be ready to substitute for election judges who do not show up. Mr. Jones thanked the election judge department for staying late and working hard to get new judges scheduled for training.

Mr. Jones shared that he and Ms. Goldman met with the supervisors of all departments. Ms. Stanley has 122 applications for technicians and then 99 technicians supplied by the state. Mr. Jones shared his goal of having at least one technician available for every polling place.

Mr. Jones shared that ballots will start going out the week of 9/23 and that the staff will be working hard to begin processing those ballots. Mr. Jones shared that the team is working hard to get the early voting judges prepared to adequately staff early voting locations to ensure the public has a good visit and has staff on hand to assist them and answer questions.

Ms. Goldman provided an update about the student election judge program for students 16 and up. She shared that they have received 77 applications. The election judge team has dedicated training classes on the 18th and 19th of October at Mount Pleasant. She also shared that there are 3 people enrolled in the program for students under 16 who are working alongside a parent or guardian.

Ms. Goldman also brought copies of the redesigned sample ballot that will be used this fall. She noted that it included many design improvements to ensure voters do not confuse them with real ballots. Ms. Goldman thanked the Center for Civic Design for their support with this design.

Mr. Barnes asked for an update on petitions. Ms. Goldman shared that the State Supreme Court ruled that the baby bonus petition was unconstitutional. The city

council reduction petition passed and it was on the ballot. The TAMF petition was rejected because of fraudulent signatures. Ms. Goldman also shared that the Supreme Court ruled that the Renew Baltimore question was unconstitutional. Ms. Goldman shared that the Harborplace ballot question will be on the ballot but that it is still being considered by the courts.

Mr. Novey asked how many chief judges had been trained. Ms. Graves shared that 143 chief judges had been trained.

Mr. Novey asked how many chief judges who did not show up in the primary had been rehired. Mr. Jones said some may have been trained and some may have been rehired.

Mr. Novey also asked about the issue that came up during the primary where some voters from abroad who had timely postmarks from the foreign post office had their ballots incorrectly referred for rejection. Ms. Goldman shared that she had met with Ms. Page and she had retrained her employees to refer ballots for acceptance if they have a timely foreign postmark.

Mr. Novey asked about what steps had been taken to intensify the training for provisional ballots to reduce the number of ballots coming in without the application filled out. Mr. Jones shared that all election judges are receiving provisional ballot training rather than just the provisional ballot judge receiving training so that there are more people in each polling place who can help.

Mr. Novey expressed his appreciation for all the efforts that Director Jones and Deputy Director Goldman have taken to address issues that came up during the primary election. Ms. Williams shared her appreciation for the election judge recruitment flyer and the WJZ segment about election judges. Ms. Goldman shared that there

Mr. Barnes asked about an update on the warehouse move. Ms. Goldman and Mr. Jones shared that the process is at a standstill and that the Baltimore City Real Estate office had not provided any updates yet.

Mr. Threweatt asked about questions he submitted in writing to the director. Mr. Barnes specified that he had updates about the concerns raised about McAfee Election Solutions by the Baltimore Banner. Ms. Goldman shared that all charges against Sam McAfee were dropped and his name was fully cleared by the court. Mr. Threweatt requested that we respond to the letter from the City Republican Party about this issue. Mr. Barnes shared that he had discussed it with counsel and there was nothing we could do to act on the contents of the letter. [IT WAS LATER DETERMINED THAT THE LETTER WOULD BE REVIEWED AND APPROVED AT THE OCTOBER 2024 MEETING].

Mr. Threweatt asked about disability inspections on proposed polling sites and copies of the polling place plans with voter impact studies. Ms. Goldman said that the voter impact studies and polling place plan are approved by the state board of elections. Ms. Goldman also shared that they do an accessible polling place survey for new

polling places. Ms. Goldman asked that we return to this issue after the election and confirmed that all polling places are up to ADA standards now (after the board approved polling place changes at the August meeting).

Mr. Threweatt expressed his frustration that he had requested these documents at the beginning of his time on the board of elections. Mr. Threweatt expressed his feeling that he was wasting his time on the board if he could not access documents like the ones he requested in a timely way and his disappointment with the board president and staff for not providing these documents. Mr. Barnes encouraged Mr. Threweatt to not feel discouraged.

ATTORNEY GENERAL REMARKS

Mr. Chapman was not present.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Goldman shared that she had received a call from Enoch Pratt that the Northwood Brand Library renovations would not be complete by the election. She proposed the following change.

- Precinct: 27-025
 - Prior Location: Enoch Pratt Free Library Northwood Branch, 4420 Loch Raven Blvd.,
 - Proposed 2024 General Election Location: Move to The League for People with Disabilities, 1111 E. Coldspring Lane, 21239. (.4 miles) (temporary move due to renovations).

Ms. Williams expressed concerns about this move. Mr. Jones shared that they have an obligation to use public buildings first and that they have used several buildings in the area before and the best option in the League for People with disabilities. Mr. Jones shared that staff does the best they can to use a convenient and accessible public building. Mr. Jones shared that plans are in place to provide signage at the League to make sure voters are able to find the appropriate precinct within that polling place.

Mr. Barnes expressed his disappointment that no elected officials other than Bill Henry and Odette Ramos did not come to the board's community hearing after the primary election and that many elected officials only engage with election issues when something comes up in their district.

Mr. Jones shared that he and the rest of the directors around the state take the buildings they have access to and make the best of it.

Ms. Vismale moved to approve the polling place change for 27-025. Mr. Novey seconded. The motion passed.

Mr. Barnes encouraged all board members to attend community meetings when invited but asked that they notify him before speaking and run any legal issues by legal counsel.

Mr. Thrweatt congratulated Mr. Barnes on the occasion of his 50th wedding anniversary.

Ms. Schedler asked if the change of the 27-025 precinct location was now public and Ms. Goldman confirmed that it was.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:06 pm.