

BOARD MEETING
BALTIMORE CITY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
MARCH 20, 2025

The meeting of the Baltimore City Board of Elections was held at the Baltimore City Board of Elections Office at 417 East Fayette Street, Baltimore MD 21202.

IN ATTENDANCE:

BOARD MEMBERS

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

STAFF

Abigail Goldman, Acting Election Director
Lisa Stanly, Acting Election Deputy Director
Thomas Chapman, Counsel

ON PHONE

Maria Vismale, Board Member (joined 10 minutes late - did not vote on any motions before "President's remarks")

ABSENT

Mr. Barnes called the board meeting to order at 4:00 pm and declared a quorum.

Ms. Williams moved to accept the agenda as written. It was seconded by Mr. Threweatt. The motion passed.

Ms. Williams moved to accept the minutes of the February 20, 2025, board meeting. Mr. Threweatt seconded the motion. The motion passed.

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

Mr. Barnes thanked the board members who reached out to him to express condolences after the passing of his sister.

Mr. Barnes also shared that he had been working with Ms. Goldman and Ms. Stanley to complete all the paperwork from SBE necessary for them to serve as Acting Director and Acting Deputy Director respectively.

Mr. Barnes also shared that he is in weekly communications with Ms. Chris Lohr-Beatty from SBE to discuss the status of Mr. Jones. SBE HR is in touch directly with Mr. Jones and his family. Mr. Barnes asked board members to keep Mr. Jones and his family in prayer.

Mr. Barnes also asked all board members to inform Ms. Goldman of their intent to attend the MAEO meeting.

Mr. Barnes also said the board would be going into executive session at the end of the meeting to discuss further updates concerning Mr. Jones.

Mr. Novey shared that he had finished typing up notes from the 2024 Election in Review meeting that happened in February. He entered these notes into the minutes (see below) and he, Ms. Goldman, and Mr. Barnes discussed having a fuller discussion of these notes at a future board meeting.

ACTING DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Goldman shared that the board is recruiting for 3 entry level roles in the office.

Ms. Goldman shared that the leadership team is meeting weekly with department heads and department heads are meeting bi-weekly with their staff. She shared that department heads feel that morale had improved in recent months across the agency.

Ms. Goldman also shared that Ms. Graves would be leading an "engagement committee" to do at least one program each quarter to recognize and engage employees. The committee has a representative from each department.

Regarding the warehouse move, Ms. Goldman reported that SBE has passed regulations requiring election offices and warehouses to be co-located and that she planned to reach back out to the city administrator and city real estate office to start over with the process of procuring space. She reported that the Wilkens Avenue location was no longer available.

Ms. Goldman shared the Mr. Muir and Mr. Walker would start to do site visits, accessibility audits, and Vizio drawings of all polling sites to see if they are viable options for use in 2026. Mr. Barnes asked when these visits would be complete. Ms. Goldman estimated that the visits would be completed by October. In particular, Ms. Goldman said she was working on engage with the Cherry Hill Recreation Center as a potential future early voting site.

Regarding petitions, Ms. Goldman shared that the Baby Fund petition was working with Mr. Thomas Chapman to submit their language for this year.

Ms. Goldman also shared an update on election bills in Annapolis. She also shared that election day for the primary would be moving to the 3rd Tuesday of the month and that she expected legislation to pass requiring local boards of election to live stream future board meetings.

Regarding Election Judge recruitment and training, Ms. Goldman shared that they had reached out to University of Baltimore about doing election judge training again in 2026. While the staff did a great job running training in 2024, the strain of

having staff out of the office at training sites for weeks during a key period before election day proved problematic for agency operations.

Ms. Goldman also shared that SBE HR visited the Baltimore City office and had a positive visit with staff.

Ms. Goldman reminded board members that the first 2 days of the MAEO meeting are mandatory for board members.

Ms. Stanley shared an update with board members regarding the logistics of attendance and reimbursement for MAEO.

ATTORNEY GENERAL REMARKS

Mr. Chapman shared that he is working to address litigation from the Baby Fund group regarding getting a court determination on the legality of their proposed charter amendment. Mr. Chapman shared that both Baltimore City Board of Elections and State Board of Elections are going to be taking no position on the merits of the case and will say we are not a proper party to the case because we have not done anything adverse to the people bringing the litigation. We will be moving to dismiss this case.

OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Stanley shared an update on the budget for FY25 (7/1/2024 - 6/30/2025). She noted that some line items are already over budget because expenses were frontloaded during the election. Ms. Stanley also shared that our status as a "quasi agency" limits our ability to access full budget updates in workday.

Mr. Barnes asked if the 3 new hires are in the budget. Ms. Goldman answered that they are not and will be added to the payroll part of the budget (these hires would only be paid for a month or two of work in FY25).

Ms. Goldman shared that the line item for temporary employees / election judges is overbudget because of an unfunded mandate from the General Assembly to raise salaries for returning judges. She shared that our budget analyst is aware of this issue, and we are making proper adjustments to the budget. This included an additional \$100 per day for every returning election judge who worked during early voting.

Mr. Novey asked about the inclusion of the Fair Election Fund balance in the City Board of Elections budget. Ms. Goldman said she would clarify whether those funds should be in our budget and whether the Baltimore City Board of Elections is responsible for any programming related to the fund.

Ms. Goldman shared that she works to move funds between categories throughout the year.

Mr. Threweatt asked about the line item for "otherwise not classified." Ms. Stanley clarified that this used to be called "professional services" and includes elements like security cameras, cabs, janitorial services, and other contracts.

Ms. Stanley said she has been working with the budget analyst to get an individual line item for every supplier we use.

Ms. Stanley suggested the workday should be updated to include a line item for "election workers" rather than "election judges" because that line include techs, canvassers, technicians.

Mr. Threweatt asked about the monthly line item for "real property rental." Ms. Goldman and Ms. Stanley confirmed that this is rent for the Benton building office. Ms. Goldman confirmed that we do not pay rent for the warehouse. Ms. Stanley also clarified that there are also many rentals of private buildings that occur for use as early voting and election day polling sites.

Mr. Threweatt also asked about the line item for "preparation of voting machines." Ms. Goldman confirmed this line item covers the contract with McAfee Election. Mr. Threweatt followed up about the bid process and the timeline for bringing these functions in house. Ms. Stanley clarified that they have not yet begun the bid process either for the McAfee contract, the drop box security cameras, or the cabs. Mr. Barnes asked about bringing the techs in house. Ms. Goldman indicated that staff want to do this and will be bringing a proposal to do this to the board. Ms. Goldman and Ms. Stanley shared that 90% of our techs return and that the techs we hire tend to be higher quality than the ones we get from outside. Many are city or state employees.

Mr. Threweatt followed up about the timeline for bringing the functions done by McAfee Election Services in-house. Ms. Goldman indicated that we would likely be continuing to use McAfee Election Services in 2026 and that she recently spoke with Mr. McAfee regarding his plan for participating in the public bid process. Ms. Goldman also shared that she felt it would not be feasible to bring these services in-house until after the office and warehouse are co-located.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Novey discussed the invitation from the Alliance for Election Excellence to join the Pathfinder cohort. Ms. Goldman said she had participated in programs sponsored by the Center for Civic Design in the past but not this particular initiative. Ms. Stanley suggested the cost could come out of the training budget. Ms. Goldman said she and Ms. Stanley would look into it and talking with Ms. Lavoie in Baltimore County and her interest.

Mr. Threweatt asked about continuation of operations in the event Mr. McAfee would not be able to support us in 2026. Mr. Barnes asked if there is any staff person who could shadow Mr. McAfee in everything that he does to help bring them up to speed. Ms. Stanley expressed that the administrative part of his role is significant as well and hard to hand off at this time while the other elements are more easy to

train staff on. Ms. Williams asked if it would be possible for Mr. McAfee to provide an end of year overview of everything he is doing - contacts, standard operating procedures, etc - so that there would be a kind "SOP bible" that would be on hand in case it was needed. Ms. Goldman suggested that his contract does include elements of this kind of documentation. Mr. Threweatt shared his feeling that if Mr. McAfee does come back that his contract should include more training work to develop the capacity of our team to accomplish these functions. Ms. Goldman affirmed that she and Ms. Stanley are also concerned about succession and continuity of operations and are working to address the concerns that the board is raising. Ms. Goldman also felt that this situation will feel different and more staffing options will be available once the office and warehouse are co-located.

Mr. Threweatt made a motion to go into executive session for personnel matters and legal advice. Ms. Williams seconded. The motion passed.