

**BOARD MEETING**  
**BALTIMORE CITY BOARD OF ELECTIONS**  
**SEPTEMBER 21, 2023**

The meeting of the Baltimore City Board of Elections was held at the Baltimore City Board of Elections Office at 417 E Fayette St # 129, Baltimore, MD 21202.

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

**BOARD MEMBERS**

Scherod Barnes, President  
Terrence Thre watt Jr., Vice President  
Sam Novey, Secretary  
Maria Vismale, Board Member

**ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL**

Thomas Chapman

**STAFF**

Armstead B. Crawley Jones, Sr., Election Director  
Abigail Goldman, Deputy Director

**ABSENT**

Hope Williams, Board Member

**GUESTS**

Misti McKeehen, Baltimore Votes

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m. by Mr. Scherod Barnes, Board President. A declaration of quorum was made. Terrence Thre watt made a motion to approve the agenda which was seconded by Sam Novey. The motion passed.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Mr. Thre watt to approve the [August 17, 2023 meeting minutes](#) which was seconded by Mr. Novey. The motion passed.

**BOARD PRESIDENT REMARKS**

Mr. Barnes shared that he and Mr. Thre watt attend meetings of the Republican and Democratic State Central Committees to share our vision for the Baltimore City Board of Elections, provide voter registration information, and hear from the community about how the Board of Elections can improve its service to Baltimore. They fielded several concerns from members of the central committees that have been forwarded to the Director and Deputy Director to address.

Mr. Barnes also shared that he will be attending the "Blue Wave Affair" celebration hosted by the Baltimore City Democratic State Central Committee in October. He encouraged other board members to attend central committees but cautioned them to not go with more than 2 members at a time in order to stay in compliance with state open meetings law.

Mr. Barnes also shared a report on his visit with Mr. Novey to the Baltimore City Board of Elections Warehouse where the Election Director Mr. Jones gave them a tour of the facility. Mr. Barnes shared his observation that the deterioration of the warehouse is bad. The ceilings are crumbling and the space is "not a place we should be in 2023." The board agreed unanimously that they are in support of the Election Director's efforts to get a new space.

### **ELECTION DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Mr. Jones shared an update on the warehouse situation. He had a meeting with the city officials from the Department of General Services who oversee space and buildings. He continues to work with them to find a location where the office and warehouse can be co-located. He expressed concern that some stakeholders continue to try and "make the West Baltimore building something it cannot be" by doing things like adding additional floors otherwise trying to retrofit the current space.

Mr. Jones is also working with Comptroller Henry to address his concerns about the moving process.

Mr. Jones expressed his desire for the moving process to begin as soon as possible so that the team has the opportunity to sort through what is at the old warehouse and only take what's needed.

Aside from the move, Mr. Jones shared that the office staff is doing its regular daily work. There are not very many new registration forms coming in although some community groups have stopped by the office to get materials for voter registration drives. The Board of Elections outreach team continues to do great work going to festivals and getting out in the community on weekends to reach people and help them update their voter registration.

Mr. Jones shared that the warehouse staff is working on moving records from the office that need to be filed from the last election. The staff is finishing up on their work scanning VAC cards.

### **ATTORNEY GENERAL REMARKS**

Legal counsel presented to board members [a document prepared by the State Board of Elections delineating the duties of local election board members and local election board staff in Maryland.](#)

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

A board member asked about the turnaround time to move the office and warehouse if the Election Director's request is approved. Mr. Jones shared that there would be a delay required to do a build out of the warehouse first. Once that is complete, it would not take that long to move everything to the new location.

Mr. Jones also shared that Comptroller Henry has requested that the Board of Election establish a "satellite office" in downtown Baltimore where people can go to file to run for office. Mr. Jones is finding a way to accommodate this request but expressed concern about separating staff and the way this satellite office might compromise his vision to get people cross trained in the various departments. He also expressed doubt that there is a sufficient volume of people coming to file to run for office to require staffing an office full time.

Mr. Barnes shared that he received two questions from board members that he addressed with the Election Director and Deputy Director. The first was about when the public will learn about which polling places are moving for the 2024 election. Mr. Barnes shared that because of the city redistricting process playing out right now with the Mayor and City Council, we will not be able to confirm precinct boundaries and locations until after the city council district maps are finalized.

The second question was about the opportunity to join the Partnership for Large Election Jurisdictions. Attorney General said that there were no legal barriers to joining. Mr. Jones said he did not think there was money in the budget at this time to pay for membership dues or to travel to PLEJ meetings.

Mr. Barnes also thanked Ms. Goldman for the packets with the redistricting map and the agenda for the Biennial conference. Ms. Goldman shared updates and details that board members should know ahead of the Biennial meeting. Mr. Jones encouraged board members to network with board members from other jurisdictions.

### **OPEN DISCUSSION**

Mr. Barnes discussed concerns shared by members of the Baltimore City Democratic State Central Committee that he is working to address with the Election Director and Deputy Director. The first item regards communicating more clearly about the process for training people to register voters and providing trainers with cards to provide new trainees with confirmation that they have been trained. Ms. Goldman clarified that the training packet includes a paper to be signed certifying that they have completed the training. Mr. Jones said he intends to create new document laying out the new procedure for what individuals are supposed to do to train new people to register voters.

The second item regards the availability of voter registration forms and whether the Board of Elections is checking the mailbox.

Mr. Threweatt shared several concerns from the Republican State Central Committee meeting. The first regarded voting rights for people under 18. Mr. Threweatt clarified for them that people under 18 are not able to vote in Baltimore City. Mr. Novey added

that some municipalities around the state do allow voting at 16 and Baltimore allows 16 and 17 year olds to pre-register and serve as election judges.

The second regarded people receiving ballots for people who previously lived at a particular residence. Ms. Goldman said that voters still receive sample ballots in the mail if the board of elections does not get a notification from the voter that they have moved.

Mr. Thre watt also mentioned that he and Mr. Barnes had encouraged all members of the central committees to serve as Election Judges and recruit others to serve.

Mr. Barnes asked the Board to look at schedules to confirm future monthly meetings. The board confirmed the following meeting dates.

October 26 at 4pm

November 16 at 4 pm

December 20 at 11 am followed by a lunch with the Election Staff at Noon.

Mr. Novey asked about the timing of the performance reviews for the Election Director. Mr. Chapman clarified that per DBM the reviews happen in January and June and that board members are able to access past reviews.

All board members signed the document on board responsibilities provided by the State Board of Elections.

Mr. Barnes introduced a guest at the meeting, Misti McKeehen from Baltimore Votes who has been working to engage student election workers. She asked about the Election Page program. Ms. Goldman said the city board of elections did not want to take responsibility for young people in polling places and did not want to participate in the election page program.

Mr. Barnes adjourned the meeting.

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Minutes passed at the October 26, 2023 Board Meeting.