

BOARD MEETING
BALTIMORE CITY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
AUGUST 17, 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 (on phone)

ABSENT

Hope Williams, Board Member

GUESTS

Ben Hovlan, Commissioner, US Election Assistance Commission

The meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m. by Mr. Scherod Barnes, Board President. A declaration of quorum was made. Sam Novey made a motion to approve the agenda which was seconded by Terrence Thre watt. The motion passed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

A motion was made by Mr. Thre watt to approve the [June 22, 2023 meeting minutes](#) which was seconded by Mr. Novey. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Mr. Thre watt to approve the [July 20, 2023 meeting minutes](#) which was seconded by Mr. Novey. The motion passed.

BOARD PRESIDENT REMARKS:

Mr. Barnes shared that he had recently had the opportunity to visit with the staff at the downtown board of elections and invited all board members to join him at 11:30 on August 29 to meet the staff at the warehouse.

Mr. Barnes also shared that he and Mr. Thre watt would be visiting the Republican State Central Committee meeting that evening and bringing voter registration materials and hand sanitizer kits for them to use in their communities.

Mr. Barnes also shared he and Mr. Thre watt are scheduled to represent the board of elections at the Democratic State Central Committee meeting in September.

It was noted that these visits with the central committees fulfill the function outlined in the [Baltimore City Board of Elections Bylaws](#) for board members to "attend central committee meetings and consult with party members." Mr. Chapman advised that no more than 2 members of the Baltimore City Board of Elections be present at any one meeting in order to ensure the board remains in compliance with Maryland Open Meetings laws.

ELECTION DIRECTORS REPORT:

Mr. Jones began his report by announcing the passing of Barbara Logan, a former Baltimore City Board of Elections Members. Mrs. Logan was killed in a tragic accident while walking near her home. Mr. Jones said he would send an official resolution to Mrs. Logan's family and would be praying for them.

Mr. Jones also shared an update about the work of the Board of Elections staff in the downtown office. He said the staff was continuing to work on incoming voter registration forms and recruitment of election judges for the May 2024 election. Mr. Jones shared his feeling that the staff are staying on track to have things where they need to be and that things are relatively quiet in the office right now. He also shared that voter registration packets remain available for individuals who come in and request them and that there are regular trainings for individuals running voter registration drives.

Mr. Jones also shared an update about the work of the Board of Elections staff working at the warehouse. He said it is relatively quiet there and that staff are working on documents that are past the date they need to be kept and getting them packed for shredding. He said he expected the pace of work at the warehouse to pick up towards the end of the year.

Mr. Jones also shared an update about recruitment, retention, and advancement opportunities for Board of Elections staff. He said that some of the vacancies in the office had been filled and that he was excited to begin training those individuals. He also said that he is having all supervisors at the Board of Elections start "cross training" in other departments so that staff are more versatile and able to work in more departments. He hopes this process will allow him to utilize the Board of Elections staff more efficiently.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Barnes asked about the [Office of the Inspector General's Report about election phones](#). Mr. Jones said there was nothing new to report and that the situation was

handled and that the service provider had given the city a refund. Mr. Barnes shared that he and Mr. Jones had spoken previously about the issue and that a new policy would be put in place for the 2024 election.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Barnes welcomed Ben Hovland from the US Election Assistance Commission to the meeting as a guest. Mr. Hovland shared an overview of the EAC's work and resources and expressed his gratitude to the Baltimore City Board of Elections for welcoming him to Baltimore.

Mr. Jones also shared a report from a meeting that Mayor Brandon Scott had with Maryland State Election Director Jared Demarinis about the new board of elections building. Mr. Jones said there has been good dialogue on this topic and now he is scheduled to meet with more leaders in city hall. Mr. Jones said he would keep the board updated about the progress in getting a new building and again expressed his feeling that Baltimore would be served better by an elections building where the full staff could work together and where the Board of Elections had consistent use of both warehouse and training facilities.

Mr. Barnes also asked Mr. Novey to share an update about the Board of Elections newsletter that would be used to post meeting minutes and agendas. Mr. Novey shared his view that the newsletter would help surface concerns and suggestions from the community and would help the board support the election staff.

Mr. Jones expressed his concern that the board not go overboard in informing the public about the actions of the board because sometimes people start reading too much into particular updates when too many are provided. Mr. Jones expressed his desire that whatever goes out is positive and lets people know what's going on but doesn't go into too many details about funding that might invite unrealistic expectations and do more damage than good.

Mr. Barnes expressed his concern that the board not let the public dictate the agenda too much. Mr. Barnes expressed that board members set the agenda for meetings and that while the public can make suggestions the board needs to fully own the responsibility of setting the agenda. He also encouraged board members to continue visiting both the central committees and the board of elections staff to help keep stakeholders informed about the work of the board.

Mr. Novey asked for clarification of what is required of the secretary to fulfill the board duty to "account to the public for services of the agency and its expenditures." Mr. Jones said he would look at the provision and clarify these responsibilities. Ms. Vismale said she felt that would be fulfilled by sharing general information but not being too specific. Mr. Chapman said he felt it was up to the discretion of the board.

Mr. Jones expressed his feeling that it is the responsibility of the central committees to help encourage people to be election judges. He shared his experience getting involved in elections first as an election judge and how much he enjoyed seeing so

many people from his community. Ms. Vismale expressed that the new online training would help. Mr. Jones noted that the increased pay should be helpful.

Mr. Barnes shared several updates on scheduling. He shared that we would need to reschedule our October meeting because it conflicts with the training for board members in Annapolis. He also asked board members to share whether they would be available for the December meeting currently scheduled for December 21. Mr. Jones mentioned that there is often a staff Christmas party and Mr. Threweatt suggested that board members attend that party to show appreciation for the staff by attending the party. Mr. Barnes confirmed the next meeting of the Board of Elections on September 21.

Mr. Barnes declared the meeting adjourned at 4:37 pm.

Board minutes approved at the September 21, 2023 meeting.