**BOARD MEETING**

**BALTIMORE CITY BOARD OF ELECTIONS**

**OCTOBER 26, 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 Thrweatt Jr., Vice President

Sam Novey, Secretary

Maria Vismale, Board Member

Hope Williams, Board Member

**ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL**

Thomas Chapman

**STAFF**

Armstead B. Crawley Jones, Sr., Election Director

Abigail Goldman, Deputy Director

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m. by Mr. Scherod Barnes, Board President. A declaration of quorum was made. Mr. Barnes 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. Thrweatt to approve the September 21, 2023 meeting minutes which was seconded by Mr. Novey. The motion passed.

**BOARD PRESIDENT REMARKS**

Mr. Barnes thanked all the board members for attending the biennial meeting of the state board of elections. He also mentioned that he and Ms. Williams would be attending the Blue Wave Affair event hosted by the Baltimore City Democratic State Central Committee that evening.

**ELECTION DIRECTOR’S REPORT:**

Mr. Jones shared that he felt the biennial meeting went well and he was glad that members of the Baltimore City Board of Elections were able to network and connect with peers from around the state.

Mr. Jones mentioned that in the office staff continue to work on the “daily work” that comes in, particularly address changes and new voter registration forms.

He mentioned that as we get closer to the holiday some staff will take time off. He hopes that all board members will take the time to attend (and contribute to) the staff Christmas party.

Mr. Jones also shared an update on the project of getting a new facility. He shared that the Comptroller’s office and a vendor are working on a plan and design for the inside of the facility. He expressed his current prediction that the move won’t happen before the election and that it will take 5 to 6 months to wire the facility once work begins.

Ms. Williams asked several questions related to whether the city had formally approved the new facility in writing. Mr. Jones answered that key city leaders had verbally expressed the intention to support the move but that it had not been formally approved yet.

Ms. Williams also expressed concern that the letter which the board of elections had approved and voted on in July to express concern to city officials about the pace of the move had not yet been sent.

Mr. Thrweatt asked several questions about recruitment of election judges. Mr. Jones shared that the increase in election judge pay and allow.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Mr. Barnes asked all members to sign the delegation of duties document. All members signed the document.

Mr. Barnes asked board members to review a map of new early voting locations provided by Ms. Goldman. The map included a proposal for a new location at Farring Baybrook Recreation Center because the prior location at Patapsco Elementary School was no longer usable. Ms. Goldman shared that the Patapsco site had the lowest utilization of all the early voting sites and that the facilities there were not great.

Mr. Thrweatt and Ms. Williams asked about putting an early vote center at BCCC or Mondawmin in West Baltimore.

Several board members expressed concerns about there no longer being an early vote location in Cherry Hill or Curtis Bay or on the south side of the Hanover Street bridge. Mr. Novey asked whether there were any plans to stakeholder engagement or other communications with affected communities. Ms. Goldman and Mr. Jones confirmed that all voters would be getting standard sample ballot and mailings with the new voting center address, but no additional outreach was planned.

Mr. Thrweatt made a motion to approve the early vote center. Ms. Vismale seconded the motion. The motion passed.

**OPEN DISCUSSION**

Ms. Goldman also commented on several concerns about disability access at several of the drop boxes raised by the League of Women Voters. With regards to the box at Morgan, she explained that originally the drop boxes had individual guards and the box could be placed on the street. That was no longer feasible once the boxes were guarded only by camera and the camera blocked the walkway. As a result, the drop box was moved up towards the building where it has been for the past few elections.

Ms. Goldman also responded to a concern from the League of Women Voters regarding a hard to find drop box at Leith Walk Elementary Middle School. She and Mr. Jones expressed the intention to provide better signage at this location in the future.

Mr. Barnes directed the Secretary Mr. Novey to design name badges and business cards for board members to use while representing the Baltimore City Board of Elections.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:58 pm

MINUTES APPROVED AT THE 2023-11-15 BOARD MEETING