

BOARD MEETING
BALTIMORE CITY BOARD OF ELECTIONS
APRIL 18, 2024

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

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

ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL

Thomas Chapman

STAFF

Abigail Goldman, Acting Election Director
Lisa Stanley, Acting Election Deputy Director
Sam McAfee, Contractor

GUESTS

Xavier Conaway, Circuit Court Clerk

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Scherod Barnes, Board President. Mr. Novey made a motion to approve the agenda that was seconded by Mr. Threweatt. The motion passed.

SWEARING IN OF BOARD OF CANVASSERS

Mr. Xavier A. Conaway, Circuit of the Court Clerk for Baltimore City swore in the members of the Board as the Board of Canvassers for the May 2024 Primary cycle.

BOARD PRESIDENT REMARKS

Mr. Barnes commended staff for their efforts to prepare for the primary. He shared that a press release had gone out regarding the importance of recruiting more election judges for election day and early voting and had received strong response from local media.

Mr. Barnes also shared that he had talked to Director Jones, and he is recovering and preparing for his return to the office.

Mr. Barnes specifically commended Lisa Stanley and Abigail Goldman for their efforts leading the office during spring 2024.

ACTING DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Ms. Goldman shared that a quorum of board members are needed for each day of the mail-in ballot canvas and there were still some slots that need to be filled.

Move update: Caton Avenue is back on the table.

Sample ballots: We sent them out staggered starting on April 9 and it appears that deliverability was improved.

Voter registration and absentee ballots: All received forms have been entered and were up to date at the time of the meeting.

Petitions: Staff is up to date on entering signatures from all petitions.

Election Judge Recruitment: Media partners have been helpful and over 200 people signed up two days prior to meeting. 800 judges short of need at time of meetings (that includes lots of people who have expressed interest but haven't come to class yet). Mr. Novey asked about the size of the pool of people who have not come to training and Acting Director Goldman shared that recruitment was on track but did not share a specific number. Ms. Stanley shared that there are challenges with election judge / poll worker recruitment statewide and nationwide. Ms. Goldman and Ms. Stanley both noted that there is increased pay for judges which should inspire more people to serve.

Drop boxes: Deployed fully and there were two issues that came up at Morgan (a bolt was taken from the camera) and at Achievement Academy where a truck hit the drop box and knocked it over.

Logic and Accuracy testing and supply cabinet inventory: Acting Director Goldman reminded board members of their duty to be present for Logic and Accuracy testing and supply cabinet inventory ahead of early voting.

Performance reviews: Mr. Novey asked about HB 459 which passed and required the state election director to conduct performance reviews. Acting Director Goldman asked Mr. Chapman to provide guidance about the process for that review. Mr. Chapman shared that he and Katie Berry from the State Board of Elections would be following up with further guidance about performance reviews.

Correctional facilities: Mr. Novey asked about compliance with law requiring outreach to correctional facilities. Ms. Goldman shared that the board had complied with the

law but that few applications had been submitted from central booking for this election.

Staff survey: Mr. Barnes shared a request from Mr. Thre watt to do a staff survey to get feedback ahead of the July performance review. Mr. Barnes asked Mr. Chapman if this is an appropriate action for the board to take. Mr. Chapman confirmed that it would be appropriate and within the powers of board to undertake such a survey. Ms. Williams asked about whether the board or state would conduct the survey. Mr. Chapman shared that he would advise that the board conduct the survey with guidance and support from the state. Mr. Barnes made clear that the board would use the data to inform evaluations for the director only during the periods that the director was on the job.

Mr. Novey made a motion Mr. Thre watt to draft questions for a state survey in consultation with State HR. Ms. Williams seconded the motion. The motion passed.

WAREHOUSE REPORT

Mr. McAfee shared that things are going well at the warehouse and that the team was conducting Logic and Accuracy testing on all the machines and now the team is preparing to pack the cabinets. He shared that the board and public would be invited to the Public Logic and Accuracy testing of the machines and confirm that they are legitimate.

Mr. McAfee shared that they would use DS850 to count ballots during the early mail-in canvas. He outlined a plan to do a public logic and accuracy test and then begin running ballots. To stay with state guidelines, we will do our best to scan ballots in batches of at least 4,000 ballots. The memory sticks on the DS850 can handle up to 10,000 ballots each. On a fast day they can do over 10,000 on both DS850s at the warehouse.

Mr. McAfee shared that most ballots can be counted quickly with only small delays for bipartisan teams of judges to open them. There are delays that can come up when ballots need to get recreated because it was damaged or destroyed. The staff has a process for keeping original ballots and recreated ballots together to make sure we are in compliance with state regulations and prepared in the event of a recount.

Mr. Barnes shared that he feels Mr. McAfee and his staff have been an incredible resource to him and the board and encouraged board members to engage him and his staff.

Mr. Thre watt asked some questions about ensuring we had enough machines and the fresh batteries in them. Mr. McAfee shared that all the machines have new batteries and that since Baltimore City consolidated many precincts there are now spare machines that can be sent out to polling places at a moment's notice if an issue arises.

ATTORNEY GENERAL REMARKS

Mr. Chapman shared that he would be present at the ballot canvass whenever the board would be making decisions about whether to accept or reject ballots. Mr. Chapman invited the board to call him at any time for questions that arise during the canvass.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Novey made a motion to accept the minutes from the March 21, 2024, meeting which was seconded by Ms. Vismale. The motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Barnes asked for a motion to make Ms. Williams President of the Board of Canvassers and Ms. Threweatt as Secretary of the Board of Canvassers. Mr. Novey made that motion and Mr. Threweatt seconded the motion. The motion passed.

After further consideration, Mr. Threweatt made a motion for Ms. Vismale to serve as Secretary of the Board of Canvassers in his place. Ms. Williams seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Mr. Barnes asked Mr. Chapman about the responsibilities of the officers on the board of canvassers. Mr. Chapman shared that the officers would swear in the staff, preside over the meetings, and the secretary would need to track data for minutes to be submitted to the state. Mr. Chapman shared that he would be providing scripts to the president of the board of canvassers for key announcements.

Mr. Vismale asked about an inquiry from a representative of a minor political party about the details of the canvass. Ms. Goldman shared that the canvass details had been posted publicly online and asked Ms. Vismale to share that link with the person who had made this inquiry.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Barnes adjourned the meeting at 5:09 pm.

Minutes approved at the June 20th, 2024 Meeting