



Carroll County Board of Elections



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Carroll County Board of Elections Board Minutes February 16, 2022

Present

Board

Griffith Manahan, President

Samuel Foster, Vice-President

John Woodley, Secretary, by virtual

Carol Coley

Harvey Tegeler

Staff

Katherine Berry, Election Director

Erin Perrone, Deputy Director

Jennifer Bartholow, Election Supervisor, by virtual

Members of the Public

Mitch Edelman, Democratic Central Committee

Katherine Shaw, Democratic Central Committee

Absent

Jay Gullo, Attorney

Call to Order & Declaration of Quorum

Mr. Manahan called the meeting to order at 10:04 am and declared that a quorum was present.

Welcome

Mr. Manahan welcomed those in attendance.

Additions to the Agenda

Mr. Manahan asked if any there were any additions to the agenda. No additions were added to the agenda.

Approval of Minutes

The Board approved the minutes from the January 19, 2022 meeting on a motion from Ms. Coley, seconded by Mr. Tegeler. The motion carried unanimously.

Correspondence

Ms. Berry reported that the voter who submitted the PIA request requesting to see the ballots from the 2020 general elections responded to the invoice sent to satisfy the PIA request. The voter is questioning the authority of not being permitted to go into a secured area to see the ballots. A response is being developed to the voter including the designation of critical infrastructure by the Department of Homeland Security.

Ms. Berry stated that thousands of mail-in ballot applications are being received through the United States Postal Service. Last Wednesday, an envelope was received in which a white, powdery substance was coming from it. The staff acted quickly, and authorities were called. Fortunately, the envelope contained a dried tortilla shell identified by a policeman. There was no return address on the envelope and no mail-in ballot application inside the envelope. The State Board of Elections, Carroll County Sheriff's Department, Carroll County Production Services and the Westminster post office were notified. In addition, the guidance counselor at Liberty High School and South Carroll High School were notified since high school interns are assisting in the office. Mr. Manahan expressed his sincere concerns regarding the staff's anxiety and security. He suggested researching equipment that can scan envelopes for its contents and detect any foreign substance. Mr. Woodley confirmed that equipment that scans envelopes and packages does exist and will send information to Ms. Berry. It is encouraged that staff wear gloves and masks while opening the mail.

Attorney Report

Mr. Manahan stated that no report is available in Mr. Gullo's absence.

Election Director's Report

Important Meetings

A list of meetings was included on the report.

Voter Registration/Absentee

Ms. Berry reported that the monthly statistical reports have been posted to the office's website. The reports can be found at <https://elections.carrollcountymd.gov/FactsAndFigures.aspx>.

IT/Warehouse

Ms. Berry reported that the new electronic pollbook solution was delayed during the January 26th meeting of the Board of Public Works, thus the new electronic pollbook solution is scheduled to be discussed at the February 16th meeting.

Ms. Berry stated that 72 new ballot marking devices were delivered and staff is performing acceptance testing. The deadline to perform acceptance testing is March 25th, and they are being entered into the State's inventory system. Yearly inventory will begin soon as required by the State Board of Elections. All State purchased voting equipment, computers, and hardware are verified in the State's inventory system.

Mail-in Voting

Ms. Berry stated that over 5,000 mail-in ballot applications have been received as of February 14th. Applications were mailed to registered Democratic and Republican voters. Additional applications will be mailed after the candidate filing deadline.

Candidate Filings

Ms. Berry reported that the deadline for candidates to file for any office for the 2022 Gubernatorial Primary Election has been extended to Tuesday, March 22, 2022. The office will be open until 9:00 pm as required by Election Law. In response to a question, Ms. Berry stated that the State Board of Elections has the authority to adjust deadlines that may be impacted by the extension of the candidate filing deadline, but the deadline for a voter to request a mail-in ballot has not been extended.

Election Judges

Ms. Berry stated that customization of the *Election Judges' Manual* is ongoing and will be completed by mid-March. The manual will be posted to the website and hard copies will be printed.

Ms. Berry reported that election judge training plans are being developed. Most of the training program will be virtual with Zoom meetings, live videos and assessments. There will be an opportunity for election judges to attend an open house to receive "hands on" training in the gymnasium. In response to a question, Ms. Berry stated that using another training facility that is not a part of the current office or warehouse space poses transportation and security issues.

Ms. Berry stated that recruiting is ongoing, but it is difficult to assign election judges to polling places when redistricting cannot be completed. However, if there are no massive changes to the proposed Congressional and Legislative maps, the amount of election judges who expressed interest in serving will be sufficient. It was emphasized, however, that the number of election judges needed is not final until redistricting can be completed.

Ms. Bartholow stated that assignments to early voting centers were quickly filled. There are still a few positions open at the North County Senior Center, but they will fill quickly.

Redistricting

Ms. Berry reported that the lawsuit regarding the Congressional district map is being heard at the Court of Appeals in Anne Arundel County on February 16th. Four separate lawsuits were filed regarding the Legislative district map. They are being heard at the Court of Appeals in Anne Arundel County on February 17th. The bill that outlined the census blocks for each proposed Commissioner districts was reviewed during preliminary redistricting tasks. It was found that the bill did not include approximately nine different census blocks and the bill has to be amended to include those census blocks. The hearing for the amendments to the bill will be heard in the General Assembly on February 17th.

Ms. Berry stated that voters cannot be assigned to their new potential new Commissioner, Congressional or Legislative districts until the lawsuits are settled. In addition, candidates cannot be assigned to their new Commissioner districts until the lawsuits are settled. Candidates who are running for Commissioner are running in their current district, not their proposed Commissioner district. The goal is to be able to provide the Board with new or updated districts, precincts and polling place locations at the March 9th meeting.

Ms. Berry showed several “working” maps in which new precincts were determined, existing precincts were cut by one of the proposed Congressional or Legislative line, and other precincts were combined with another precinct. In response to a question, it is believed that only the court can determine whether implementation of the proposed lines can be delayed.

Legislation

Ms. Berry distributed a list of proposed bills that affect elections. In particular, *SB163 - Election Law - Ballots - Processing and Reporting Procedures*, has been moved out of both committees. This bill would allow the opening of mail-in ballots 8 business days prior to the start of early voting. It will also codify the signature curing process if a voter fails to sign the oath on the mail-in ballot envelope. In response to a question, *SB738 - Secure Elections Act of 2022* would allow signature verification before the start of canvassing and establishes a standard to compare signatures. The bill was introduced by Senators Simonaire, Bailey, and Ready.

Ms. Berry reported that she was asked by the Deputy Administrator of Elections, Nikki Charlson, to act as the local board expert during voting sessions to address questions that involve processes and procedures performed by a local board. The request was accepted.

Personnel & Budget

Ms. Berry stated that the final budget or CIP has not yet been received.

Next Board Meeting and Important Dates for Your Calendar

Ms. Berry reviewed the dates of future Board meetings and tentative dates for next year’s elections.

- March 9, 2022 – Board Meeting
- April 20, 2022 – Board Meeting
- May 18, 2022 – Board Meeting
- June 15, 2022 – Board Meeting
- July 8, 2022 – Board Meeting
- August 17, 2022 – Board Meeting
- September 14, 2022 – Board Meeting

*2022 Election Dates – *TENTATIVE**

- June 16-23, 2022 – Primary Early Voting
- June 28, 2022 – Primary Election Day

- June 30 and July 8, 2022 – Mail-in Ballot Canvass
- July 6, 2022 – Provisional Ballot Canvass
- October 27 – November 3, 2022 – General Early Voting
- November 8, 2022 – General Election Day
- November 10 and 18, 2022 – Mail-in Ballot Canvass
- November 16, 2022 – Provisional Ballot Canvass

Public Comments

Two members of the public were in attendance. Ms. Shaw expressed her concern that society, in general, does not think about the Constitution. She also hopes that the third early voting center does not create a problem. In response to a question, Ms. Perrone confirmed that the Court of Appeals has seven judges. Mr. Edelman had no comments.

Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

New Business

Ms. Berry stated that a letter and the confidentiality form were mailed to seven confidential voters to sustain confidential voter status. Four of those seven voters returned their form and it was confirmed that all four of those voters are present or past court judges. The Board approved the confidential status of the four voters who submitted their paperwork on a motion from Mr. Foster, seconded by Ms. Coley. The motion carried unanimously.

Disclosure of Campaign Contributions

Ms. Coley reported a campaign contribution of \$50.00 to Jamie Raskin.

Date of Next Meeting

The next board meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 9, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Mr. Tegeler, seconded by Mr. Foster at 11:00 am. The motion passed unanimously.