



Carroll County Board of Elections



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Carroll County Board of Elections Board Minutes June 21, 2023

Present

Board

Samuel Foster, Vice-President, in person

Carol Coley, Member, in person

Karen Donaldson, Member, in person

Mitch Edelman, Member, in person

Ben Watson, Member, in person

Jay Gullo, Attorney, in person

Staff

Katherine Berry, Election Director, in person

Erin Perrone, Deputy Director, in person

Public

Corynne Courpas, Carroll County Democratic Central Committee

Cheryl Steinbacher, Co-chair, League of Women Voters, Carroll County

Call to Order & Declaration of Quorum

Ms. Berry called the meeting to order at 10:02 am and declared a quorum was present.

Welcome

Ms. Berry welcomed those in attendance and asked the new members of the Board to introduce their selves.

Additions to the Agenda

Ms. Berry asked if any there were any additions to the agenda. There were no additions added to the agenda.

Approval of Minutes

The Board approved the minutes from the May 31, 2023, meeting on a motion from Mr. Edelman, seconded by Mr. Watson. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Comments

Ms. Berry and Mr. Gullo reviewed the public comments policy. It is required that members of the public ask in advance to speak to the Board by emailing Ms. Berry. The reason for this policy is to continue having structured meetings.

Correspondence

Ms. Berry stated that any correspondence received will be presented to the Board at each meeting.

Attorney Report

Mr. Gullo explained his role to the Board. In addition to leading closed sessions to discuss confidential or legal issues, he participates in meetings with other counsels who represent the local boards. In response to a question, he stated that there are some things that must be followed according to State laws, regulations, and guidelines.

Election Director's Report

Important Meetings

June 5th, 8th, 20th – State Board of Elections Meetings

June 13th – Pollbook Update Meeting

June 15th – Election Directors' Meeting hosted by the State Board of Elections

Structure of Elections in Maryland

Ms. Berry explained the structure of elections in Maryland. The State Board of Elections (SBE) oversees the conduct of elections across the State. Currently, Linda Lamone is the State Administrator, but after her retirement on September 1st, Jared DeMarinis will become the new State Administrator. The State Board has a 5-member board, and they meet once a month. Every two years (or during off election years), the State Board is required to hold the Biennial Meeting in which attendance is mandatory, unless excused by the State Administrator. Ms. Berry reminded the Board that the Biennial Meeting will be held on Thursday, October 19th, in Annapolis.

Each county and Baltimore City has its own local election office. The staff was introduced to the Board.

The Maryland Association of Election Officials, better known as MAEO, is comprised of local election officials. There are many committees, such as the Legislative Committee, Voter Registration Committee, and the Mail-in Ballot Committee. These committees conduct meetings to learn from each other and to discuss best practices and lessons learned. MAEO holds a conference every year, and depending on the time of the year, the conference may be one day or multiple days.

A list of acronyms was sent to each member of the board.

Voter Registration

Ms. Berry explained that Maryland has a statewide voter registration database called MDVOTERS. The database not only handles voter registration, but is also how candidates are filed, reports are printed, election judges are hired and paid, and list maintenance occurs. There are active, inactive, pending, and cancelled voters. Maryland is a member of the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC). ERIC is a non-profit entity that

assists with voter registration across the country with states who participate. Maryland is considered one of the founding members of ERIC.

Maryland has automatic voter registration. For example, if a person makes a transaction at the MVA, the person must opt out to register to vote or opt out of the local election office receiving updated MVA information.

Every month, voter registration statistics are available on our website. The link to the reports is <https://elections.carrollcountymd.gov/monthlyStats.aspx>.

Mail-in Ballots

Ms. Berry explained the difference between absentee ballots and mail-in ballots. Legislation was passed to change the term “absentee” to “mail-in” since Maryland always had no excuse absentee balloting. So, there is no difference between the two terms. However, using the terms “mail-in ballot” and “mail-in voting” should be used. SBE is required to send mail-in ballot applications to all voters who have not previously asked for a mail-in ballot. Voters must ask to get a mail-in ballot prior to each election cycle unless the voter asked to be on the permanent mail-in ballot list. Permanent mail-in voters are voters who asked to get a mail-in ballot for all statewide elections (this does not include municipal elections). Voters can ask to be a permanent mail-in voter or to be removed from the permanent mail-in ballot list at any time.

Ballot drop boxes are required by Election Law. There are currently six ballot drop boxes in Carroll County and there is flexibility to add more ballot drop boxes. However, there cannot be any less than six ballot drop boxes.

Canvassing mail-in ballots is determined in Election Law. Historically, canvassing mail-in ballots could not begin until the first Thursday after election day. However, a new law allows local boards to have at least one day of canvassing prior to the start of early voting (better known as pre-canvassing). The date and length of pre-canvass cannot yet be determined until it is known how many ballots are returned to the office at least eight days before the first day of early voting.

Ms. Berry emphasized the importance of flexible schedules during election years.

Polling Places/Early Voting Centers

Ms. Berry reported that site surveys have been completed for current polling places and for polling places that may be used in the 2024 elections. The Board will review the polling places, ballot drop box locations, and early voting centers in a future meeting.

A polling place plan must be submitted to SBE for approval because of new legislation that was passed during the 2023 session of the General Assembly. Once the plan is approved by the Board, it will then be forwarded to SBE for their approval.

The number of early voting centers is dictated by Election Law. There are currently three early voting centers with an option of a fourth early voting center.

Election Judges

Ms. Berry reported that she and Ms. Perrone participate in weekly meetings held by SBE to revise and update the *2024 Election Judges' Manual*. Staff is currently working to finalize the post-election survey information from prior election judges. Voter registration and election judge outreach is ongoing as staff prepare to attend events in the county. Election judge training will begin in February, and the training will be virtual and in person for all election judges.

IT/Warehouse

Ms. Berry explained that all voting equipment, pollbooks, and election judge supplies are stored on premises. SBE required all equipment to be charged and maintained, and nothing is done to the equipment unless it is required by SBE. New pollbooks are to replace the current electronic pollbooks for the 2024 elections. The beginning stages of acquiring information on a new voting system for the 2026 elections has begun by SBE.

Personnel/Budget/County Issues

Ms. Berry reminded everyone that emails are covered under PIA. Emergency contact information is required to be submitted for all Board members.

Mr. Gullo stated that political activities performed by the Board is covered in the bylaws and State law. Any political contributions must be disclosed at the end of each board meeting. In response to a question, letters written to an editor are permissible if it is not election related. Anything election related should be approved by the Board.

Board members are required to fill out ethics paperwork. An email will be sent by the State Ethics Commission when it is time for the paperwork to be completed.

Mr. Foster confirmed that he received his Open Meeting Certification. Mr. Gullo suggested that all the Board members take the online training.

Ms. Berry explained the role of the Carroll County government in elections. The election budget is submitted and approved by Carroll County. The FY25 budget will be reviewed and approved by the Board in December 2023.

When the Board is planning to discuss early voting centers or polling place locations at its monthly meeting, notice must be given to elected officials and the public. Notice will be given via the website, email, and text message if requested.

2023 Board Meetings

The Board decided to continue holding meetings on the 3rd Wednesday of each month.

- October 19th – Biennial Meeting hosted by the State Board of Elections. This meeting is mandatory for board members and attorneys. It will be held in Annapolis.

2024 Save the Date!

- April 8th – May 14th – Drop Box Pick-Ups
- April 22nd – First Mail-In Ballot Canvass
- May 2nd – 9th – Presidential Primary Early Voting
- May 14th – Presidential Primary Election Day
- May 16th – Mail-In Ballot Canvass
- May 22nd – Provisional Ballot Canvass
- May 24th – Final Canvass & Certification
- September 30th – November 5th – Drop Box Pick-Ups
- October 14th – First Mail-In Ballot Canvass
- October 24th – 31st – Presidential General Early Voting
- November 5th – Presidential General Election
- November 7th – Mail-In Ballot Canvass
- November 13th – Provisional Ballot Canvass
- November 15th – Final Canvass & Certification

Unfinished Business

There is no unfinished business.

New Business

Election of Officers of the Board

Ms. Coley nominated Mr. Foster to be the President of the Board. The motion was seconded by Ms. Donaldson. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Watson nominated Ms. Donaldson to be the Vice-President of the Board. The motion was seconded by Mr. Foster. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Edelman nominated Ms. Coley to be the Secretary of the Board. The motion was seconded by Mr. Foster. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Attorney Contract Renewal

Mr. Watson made a motion to renew the 2-year contract for the Board Attorney. The motion was seconded by Ms. Coley. The motion passed unanimously.

By Law Presentation

Ms. Coley made a motion to accept the by laws as written. The motion was seconded by Ms. Donaldson. The motion passed unanimously. The by laws will be presented to the Board at its next meeting for signatures.

Disclosure of Campaign Contributions

No contributions were reported.

Date of Next Meeting

The next board meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 16th, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. There will be no July 2023 meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Ms. Coley, seconded by Ms. Donaldson at 12:00 pm. The motion passed unanimously.