



# Carroll County Board of Elections



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## Carroll County Board of Elections Board Minutes October 18, 2023

### **Present**

#### *Board*

Samuel Foster, President, in person  
Karen Donaldson, Vice-President, in person  
Carol Coley, Secretary, in person  
Mitch Edelman, Member, in person  
Ben Watson, Member, in person  
Jay Gullo, Attorney, in person

#### *Staff*

Erin Perrone, Acting Director, in person  
Jennifer Bartholow, Election Program Specialist I, in person  
Kimberly Jones, Election Program Supervisor II, virtual  
Eduardo DeLima, Election Information Systems Specialist, virtual  
Mia Faber, Election Program Supervisor, virtual  
John Michael Gudger, Election Program Assistant, virtual  
Hunt Hobbs, Election Program Assistant, virtual

#### *Public*

Katherine Adelaide, Carroll County Republican Central Committee, in person  
Katherine Berry, State Board of Elections, Deputy Administrator, in person  
Corynne Courpas, Carroll County Democratic Central Committee, in person  
Robin Frazier, Carroll County Republican Central Committee, in person  
Anthony Gutierrez, Deputy Director, Frederick County Board of Elections, in person  
Cheryl Steinbacher, Co-Chair, League of Women Voters, Carroll County, in person

### **Welcome**

Mr. Foster welcomed those in attendance and introduced the members of the public that were present in the room. Ms. Perrone explained there was a technical issue with the microphone and camera for the virtual portion of the meeting and the IT staff was called in to assist.

### **Call to Order & Declaration of Quorum**

Mr. Foster called the meeting to order at 10:08 am and declared a quorum was present.

### **Additions to the Agenda**

Mr. Foster asked if any there were any additions to the agenda. There were no additions added to the agenda. However, the *Return to Open Session* was removed from the agenda prior to the meeting after the agenda was printed. The in-person public attending the meeting received the agenda which stated the *Return to Open Session* and were informed that this would not take place.

### **Approval of Minutes**

The Board approved the minutes from the September 20th, 2023, meeting on a motion from Ms. Donaldson, seconded by Mr. Watson. The motion carried unanimously.

### **Public Comments**

Mr. Foster reviewed the public comments policy. It is required that members of the public ask in advance to speak to the Board by emailing Ms. Perrone.

There were no requests for public comments.

### **Correspondence**

Ms. Perrone presented the Board with copies of a press release issued by the Maryland State Board of Elections in conjunction with The State of Maryland Office of the State Prosecutor. This press release, dated October 12, 2023, was regarding the *1776 Project PAC* which was fined over \$20,000 for failure to include an authority line in Carroll County School Board race.

The Board was also given copies of a contact sheet that included the names, phone numbers and emails for all members of the Carroll County Board of Elections office staff and Board members.

### **Attorney Report**

Mr. Gullo stated that at the end of today's meeting there would be a closed session to discuss the hiring of the Election Director for the Carroll County Board of Elections.

Mr. Gullo reminded the Board that this was the time to state any legal issues they would like to discuss during this meeting. Ms. Coley stated that she had sent information to Ms. Perrone which was forwarded to Katherine Berry, Deputy State Administrator.

Mr. Gullo asked the Board if they were receiving the emails he sent. There had been issues regarding incorrect email addresses and all Board members confirmed they were now receiving the information Mr. Gullo was sending to them.

### **Election Director's Report**

#### ***Public Information Requests & Correspondence***

PIA Request for ES&S Report EL68A (System Log) for the 2018, 2020 and 2022 general elections from Maryann Judy at [electionspublicrecordsrequest@gmail.com](mailto:electionspublicrecordsrequest@gmail.com). Ms. Perrone

stated that we do not produce those reports and if that report does not exist, we are not required to create it. Ms. Donaldson asked if we could direct her somewhere else. Ms. Perrone stated that Ms. Judy would be referred to the State Board of Elections.

### ***Important Meetings***

- September 21<sup>st</sup> – Election Directors’ Meeting hosted by SBE
- September 22<sup>nd</sup> – County HR about Election Judge Paperwork
- September 25<sup>th</sup> – Visit from State Administrator and Deputy Administrator – Cancelled and will be rescheduled for November 7<sup>th</sup>
- September 27<sup>th</sup> – Election Judge Manual Workgroup Meeting
- September 29<sup>th</sup> – Lease Update with County
- October 5<sup>th</sup> – HB1200/MDVOTERS Election Judge Meeting hosted by SBE
- October 13<sup>th</sup> – Ashleigh Smith, Budget Analyst for FY25 Budget Preparation
- October 19<sup>th</sup> – Biennial Conference hosted by SBE – those who are carpooling plan to meet at 6:30 am
- October 26<sup>th</sup> – State Board Meeting at 1:30 pm

### ***Candidate Filing***

- Board of Education – two candidates filed at office
- Congressional District 2 – one candidate filed at SBE
- Congressional District 3 – no candidates filed at SBE
- President – no candidates filed at SBE
- Encourage candidates to make an appointment to file for candidacy

### ***Voter Registration***

Monthly statistical reports are available on our website. The link to the reports is <https://elections.carrollcountymd.gov/monthlyStats.aspx>.

### ***Mail-In Ballots***

- MIB applications and Permanent MIB confirmation letters
- Statistics – For the 2024 primary election:
  - Total MIB requests – 10,491
    - Domestic voters – 10,447
    - UOCAVA voters - 44
    - 9,289 – Mailed
    - 1,201 – Web Delivery – Ms. Coley stated this would affect the number of duplications during canvass.
    - 1 – Large Print Ballot
  - Permanent MIB requests – 10,416 – Ms. Perrone stated that letters would go out to permanent mail-in ballot voters to confirm they would like to remain in this status and to all other voters to see if they would prefer the option of a mail-in ballot.

### ***Early Voting Centers/Polling Places***

Ms. Perrone reported that the documentation for the early voting centers is waiting for approval by the State Board of Elections (SBE) at their 1:30 p.m. meeting scheduled on Thursday, October 26, 2023.

Ms. Perrone stated that the Polling Place Plan has been completed and will be discussed in more detail during the New Business section of today's meeting.

### ***Election Judges***

Ms. Perrone stated that the election judge team, Jennifer Bartholow and Olivia Smith, has met with the County HR Department regarding the election judge paperwork. The decision was made to continue doing the paperwork at the Board of Elections office. Mr. Watson asked if the judges need to complete the paperwork every year. Ms. Perrone stated that all paperwork except for the copy of the social security card is required every year.

Ms. Perrone shared that the election judge and warehouse teams have been working on checklists, a training calendar, training materials including videos. Employees acknowledged for their efforts in this project were Jennifer Bartholow, Kim Jones, Olivia Smith, Eduardo DeLima and Isaac Nogueron. Election judge training is estimated to begin mid-March 2024.

Ms. Perrone stated that election judge recruitment is going well. The increase in pay and the additional bonus has been a great incentive. Ms. Coley shared that she placed the tri-fold brochure in public areas and would like to get more brochures. Ms. Bartholow confirmed that she has received feedback and election judge hires from those placements. Ms. Donaldson requested to receive some of the brochures so she can also hand them out. Ms. Bartholow will have the brochures available in our office after the meeting.

### ***IT/Warehouse***

Ms. Perrone reported that the required charging for the voting equipment is on schedule.

Ms. Perrone explained that the pollbooks had previously been wiped clean in the anticipation of the new pollbook solution, which has been postponed until 2026. The IT staff will be loading the previous software onto the current pollbooks.

Ms. Perrone explained that although the new pollbooks will not be released in 2024 we will continue to work with SBE to train our staff and test the new system. During the week of November 27<sup>th</sup>, staff members will be attending training on the new pollbooks. During the week of December 12<sup>th</sup>, staff members will participate in a statewide testing of the connectivity and functionality of the new pollbook solution.

### ***Personnel/Budget/County Issues***

Ms. Perrone informed the Board on the status of the new building. Currently waiting for confirmation that the October 26<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Carroll County Commissioners will

include the presentation of the lease signage and approval of the build out for the new building. Ms. Coley asked if there were any concerns and what the timeframe for moving would be. Ms. Perrone stated that she does not anticipate any issues and the timeframe depends on how long the build out will take. Ms. Donaldson asked why the building did not have a cost per square foot and if this could factor into the Commissioners decision. Ms. Perrone responded that those issues were dealt with between the County and the landlord and that she does not feel this will be an issue because of the pre-approval that was made by the Commissioners.

Ms. Perrone presented the Board with a packet of information on the "*Design the Carroll County "I Voted" Sticker!*" contest that is opened to the youth of Carroll County. Staff member Mia Faber has taken on this project and is eager to present this to the community through a press release, contact with public schools, home school communities and social media. Ms. Coley gave "kudos" to Ms. Faber for her work.

### **2023/2024 Board Meetings**

- October 19, 2023 – State Biennial Meeting
- November 15, 2023
- December 13, 2023
- January 17, 2024
- February 21, 2024
- March 20, 2024
- April 17, 2024
- No Meeting in May
- June 19, 2024
- July 17, 2024
- No Meeting in August
- September 18, 2024
- October 16, 2024

### **2024 Election Save the Date!**

- April 8 – May 14, 2024 – Drop Box Pick-Ups
- April 22, 2024 – First Mail-In Ballot Canvass
- May 2-9, 2024 – Presidential Primary Early Voting
- May 14, 2024 – Presidential Primary Election Day
- May 16, 2024 – Mail-In Ballot Canvass
- May 22, 2024 – Provisional Ballot Canvass
- May 24, 2024 – Final Canvass & Certification
- September 30 – November 5, 2024 – Drop Box Pick-Ups
- October 14, 2024 – First Mail-In Ballot Canvass
- October 24-31, 2024 – Presidential General Early Voting
- November 5, 2024 – Presidential General Election
- November 7, 2024 – Mail-In Ballot Canvass
- November 13, 2024 – Provisional Ballot Canvass

- November 15, 2024 – Final Canvass & Certification

### **Unfinished Business**

Mr. Watson asked about the status of Ms. Robin Frazier’s comments from the September 20, 2023, Board Meeting. Ms. Donaldson requested this be added to the new business for the November meeting.

### **New Business**

#### ***Delegation of Duties Review and Approval***

Ms. Perrone presented the Board with the SBE document *Assignment of Local Board of Elections’ Duties to Members of the Local Board, the Election Director and Staff*. Ms. Perrone explained that this document shows the list of duties required and who is responsible for each duty is noted with a check mark. When asked if anyone had any questions regarding the responsibilities Ms. Donaldson and Mr. Edelman both stated that it was very “straight forward”, and no one had any questions. The motion to approve the Delegation of Duties was made by Mr. Edelman. The motion was seconded by Ms. Donaldson. The motion was passed unanimously.

#### ***Updated Bylaws Required by SBE***

At its June meeting, the Board approved the bylaws, but SBE made minimal revisions to the bylaws template. The Board was presented with the updated version which included the adopted date change that need signatures from the Board. Ms. Coley made the motion to approve the updated version of the bylaws required by SBE. There were no objections or comments. The motion was seconded by Mr. Watson. The motion was passed unanimously.

#### ***Polling Place Plan Review and Approval***

Ms. Perrone presented the *Polling Place Plan – 2024 Presidential Elections* to the Board to explain the new process required by SBE and HB410. The changes were posted on the website and emails were sent to the Carroll County Delegation in Annapolis, the Carroll County Commissioners, municipalities and the general public, if the polling place change affected their district or municipality, on Wednesday, October 11<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Tom Gordon responded by email expressing his thanks for the updates.

Ms. Perrone explained the complexities of the polling place plan and requested that questions be held until she completed the presentation and continued to explain the reasoning for the changes. Ms. Perrone thanked the staff members who assisted with the process including Kim Jones, Eduardo DeLima, Isaac Nogueron, Olivia Smith and Jennifer Bartholow.

*Proposed Polling Place per District/Precinct* is a table that lists each district/precinct and the polling place where voters who live in that district/precinct will vote on election day. The rows highlighted indicate a polling place change that will affect the voters who live in that district/precinct.

*Consolidated Polling Places* is a table that shows the consolidated polling places by district/precinct, the number of voters registered at each consolidated polling place and the number of ballot styles in the primary and general elections. Consolidated polling places mean there are multiple districts/precincts assigned to the polling place. Ms. Perrone explained the reasoning for each change.

Some of the reasons there are multiple precincts going to one polling place include:

- Precincts that have a very low number of registered voters will be incorporated into a larger polling place.
- Polling place locations that have large parking lots and gymnasiums to facilitate voters. For example, local high schools.
- Election judge recruitment.
- Precincts that have no viable building to facilitate voting and the polling place where they vote is closest to where they live.
- Ghost Precincts – which are precincts where no one lives and the land is not buildable. For example, Liberty Reservoir and the section of land where Rt 97 & Rt 32 meet.

*Explain the Polling Place Plan required by SBE*

Ms. Perrone shared the printed documents for District/Precinct 01-001 - Northwest Middle School with the Board as an example of all the information gathered for each of the 25 polling place locations. All documentation submitted to SBE for each polling place is available electronically. The documents include but are not limited to a selection form, ADA survey, digital photos, an interior map which shows voter flow and room schematics and an outside map which includes the electioneering zone, ballot drop box and the areas that voters wait in line.

In addition to the documentation, SBE requires a Google sheet and a Smartsheet to be completed. The Google sheet collects information and maps to determine the voter density, whether the precinct has a “historically disenfranchised community,” and whether the precinct has a low voter turnout. It also compares the number of precincts and polling places used in the 2018 elections to the proposed polling places for the 2024 elections.

Ms. Perrone displayed the documentation on the screen for the Board to view and encouraged the Board to ask any questions. Ms. Coley questioned whether this was a new process, and Ms. Perrone explained that in the past we only had to complete this kind of documentation for early voting centers, not polling places on election day. However, this is now required for polling places on election day because of the passage of HB410.

Ms. Coley gave “kudos” to the staff. Mr. Watson commented on the “great work” and noted that the process was “very extensive” and asked if we will alert the voters about locations that are no longer being used. Ms. Adelaide asked to speak, and Mr. Foster approved. She thanked Mr. Watson for asking about how we would alert voters and stated she could “anticipate the confusion” the voters may face. Ms. Perrone explained that we will be

sending out new *Voter Confirmation Cards* to all these voters, posting notes on the doors with office information so voters can call the office for help, social media posts, possibly a QR code to help them find their correct polling place and election judges are trained to assist a voter in finding the correct location or to vote a provisional ballot if they arrive at the wrong location. Ms. Courpas stated she would like maps to assist in notifying voters.

Mr. Watson made a motion to accept the Polling Place Plan as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Coley. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Disclosure of Campaign Contributions**

No contributions were reported.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

The next board meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 15, 2023, at 10:00 am.

### **Closed Session and Adjournment**

Mr. Gullo proposed that the Board go into closed session to discuss the possible appointment of the Election Director. The Board will not be returning to Open Session. Ms. Coley made the motion and Mr. Edelman seconded. The motion was passed unanimously at 11:05 am.

Closed Meeting: This part of the meeting will be closed in accordance with Open Meetings Act, Title 10, Subtitle 5, Section 3-305(b) to discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom it has jurisdiction.