

Board of Elections
Office

300 South Center Street, Room 212
Westminster, Maryland 21157-5248



410-386-2080
TOLL FREE: 1-888-302-8978
MD RELAY: Call 711 or 800-735-2258(TTY)
elections.carrollcountymd.gov
FAX: 410-876-3925

Carroll County Board of Elections
Board Minutes
July 15, 2020

Present:

Board

Griffith Manahan, President
John Woodley, Secretary
Samuel Foster

Staff

Katherine Berry, Election Director
Paula Troxell, Deputy Director

Absentee

Laura O'Callaghan, Vice President
Harvey Tegeler
Jay Gullo, Attorney

Guest

Mary Wagner, by telephone

Call to Order & Welcome:

Mr. Manahan, President, called the meeting to order at 10:09 a.m. A quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes:

The Board approved the minutes from the June 19, 2020 meeting, on a motion from Mr. Woodley, seconded by Mr. Foster. The motion carried unanimously.

Attorney Report:

None

Staff Report:

Voter Registration:

Mary Wagner, Director of the Voter Registration division at SBE provided an overview of the list maintenance process. Ms. Wagner explained that SBE must comply with the National Voter Registration Act and state laws when updating voter information. She also explained that Maryland is a member of the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC). Information received from ERIC is processed by the LBE offices. Ms. Wagner confirmed that the data received from ERIC

includes the death records from the Social Security Administration. She reported that SBE has provided to MVA a list of voters in a confirmation status, voters in an undeliverable status, and inactive voters to try to receive updated addresses so that SBE can send a mailing to the voters prior to the general election.

- Mr. Manahan asked how many of our neighboring states participate in ERIC. Ms. Wagner said that Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Virginia participate in ERIC.
- Mr. Manahan asked if a death of a voter occurs in another state would that state notify us. Ms. Wagner stated that ERIC captures death records in their reports.
- Mr. Manahan explained that he worked with a family that received a ballot for a family member that died in 2017. He said that the death records received had a different name than how the voter was registered. Mr. Manahan stated that this presented a flaw in the system. Ms. Wagner recognized his concern and stated that LBEs perform a “loose” match to locate the voters but there is not a perfect system. She stated that even though there are “flaws” the benefit of using ERIC to update voter information outweigh the minimal number of voters that can’t be matched.
- Mr. Woodley asked why the social security number would not be used to match the voter. Ms. Wagner explained that MVA data was used to do this match but as Ms. Berry explained social security numbers are not in all voter registration records.
- Mr. Woodley asked if the updates are provided to the LBEs electronically or manually. Ms. Wagner said the information is uploaded to the voter registration system for the LBEs to process.
- Mr. Manahan stated that his granddaughter had her primary ballot mailed to her college address and she is no longer in college. He didn’t understand how the ballot was mailed to the college address. Mr. Manahan also questioned what happened to the ballot sent to the college address. Ms. Troxell explained that when she completed the absentee ballot online, she added her college address to her voter registration record, and she has not contacted the office to update her mailing address. Ms. Berry said that the ballot mailed to the college address was probably returned to the office and she offered to verify receipt of the returned ballot.

Ms. Wagner thanked everyone for inviting her to the meeting and stated that more information on ERIC can be found by visiting ericstates.org.

Backlog of the voter registration applications and ERIC have been completed.

Ms. Berry said the staff is working to process the undeliverable ballots.

As it stands now, the voter registration deadline will not change for the general election.

A specimen ballot will be mailed to all registered voters who do not complete a mail in ballot application by the time the specimen ballots are mailed in mid-September.

Vote by Mail:

Ms. Berry reported that mail in ballot applications will be mailed to all registered voters. One of the concerns is how the LBE offices will be able to process all the vote by mail applications received because of not enough staff, office space and computers. SBE is researching the possibility of using a central data center to process the applications. A decision on prepaid postage for the return of the applications has not been made. Ms. Berry stated that she does not know if verbiage will be included with the application explaining to the voter that if a ballot is mailed to them and they decide to vote in-person that they will be required to vote a provisional ballot. A date to mail the applications has not been determined.

Drop boxes will be used for the general election and SBE is updating the policy. Ms. Berry has requested a fourth box for North Carroll Senior Center.

The deadline to accept an absentee ballot application will remain the same as previous elections unless the State Board is able to change it. SBE may not be able to change the date because the Governor would have to issue a “Proclamation” to give SBE the authority to change the date. The canvass dates may not change because the general election is being conducted as a “normal” election.

Livestream may still be required. Ms. Berry has contacted Carroll Media Center to request their assistance with livestreaming the canvasses.

IT/Warehouse

Ms. Berry stated that the voting equipment has been released so post-election maintenance will begin.

The items used from the in-person election have been sanitized. Ms. Berry stated that the LBEs are waiting on final confirmation that an in-person election will occur.

Polling Places & Election Judges

Ms. Berry stated that after today’s meeting a letter will be sent to SBE requesting approval of the third early voting center at the July 23, 2020, State Board meeting.

Carroll County Public Schools has agreed to allow use of all schools that are polling places. Ms. Berry stated that CCPS will provide additional custodian staff to sanitize the facility.

Pleasant Valley Fire Department, Winfield Fire Department and the South Carroll Swim Club have agreed to allow the office to use their facilities as polling places. Ms. Berry stated that as of this morning, the Westminster Senior Center has agreed to allow the office to use their facility as a polling place.

Carroll Lutheran will not allow a polling place at their facility. Ms. Berry has not heard from Fairhaven but is assuming that they will not allow a polling place at their facility. Due to the unavailability of these two facilities, Ms. Berry is recommending that the polling place at Fairhaven be moved to Sykesville Middle School and the polling place at Carroll Lutheran be moved to Westminster Elementary School.

- After a brief discussion, Mr. Manahan asked for a motion to move Fairhaven to Sykesville Middle School and Carroll Lutheran to Westminster Elementary School. Mr. Foster made the motion; seconded by Mr. Woodley. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Berry discussed the need for consolidating precincts or co-locating precincts if it is determined that not enough election judges are available to support 36 precincts. This change will require another board meeting in two weeks after the full analysis of the election judge vacancies has been completed.

Social distancing guidelines will be followed for each polling location based on the maximum number of individuals allowed in the building at one time. Ms. Berry explained that less voting booths will be available, and the amount of check-in and ballot issuance judges will be reduced.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) has been ordered for the polling places. It will cost approximately \$20,000 and it is a 100% cost to the counties.

- Ms. Berry reported that she did not order plexiglass screens because we would need one for every check-in and ballot issuance judge. The plexiglass is extremely costly, add to transportation space and cost and may be difficult for the judges to set up. The judges will be required to wear face shields and masks.
- Additional greeters will be required to assist with management of PPE.
- There is no “Cares” money available to help with the PPE expenses.

A maximum of two Ballot Marking Devices (BMD) will be allowed at each polling place. Approval to send more BMDs must be done by SBE. Ms. Berry explained that 26 polling places will have two BMDs and 10 polling places will have 1. An increase in BMDs will impact transportation of equipment and polling place layouts that have already been completed.

Ms. Berry will check the availability of the Sheriff’s Department once the plans for November are in the final stages.

Personnel/Budget

SBE, MACO and LBEs are asking the Governor for money to pay for the general election expenses. There has not been clarification regarding the Governor’s statement about funding for the general election.

Interviews for the vacant position will occur on July 21, 2020. Ms. Berry reported that seven candidates will be interviewed.

Ms. Berry has requested three positions as part of the State's staffing contract. This does not mean the positions have to be used, but they are available if we need to use them. This expense would be billed from SBE on the quarterly billing and this expense has not been budgeted.

A county contractual position will be posted in the next two weeks. A brief discussion occurred about the need for staffing with the large amount of work that is expected in the office. Ms. Berry explained that staff is needed but computers and all ancillary items also need to be purchased for the employees to be able to work.

Ms. Berry continues to monitor the Commissioner's meeting for the charter government discussion. If charter government moves forward a petition with 6,000 signatures will need to be processed by the staff.

The 2020 MAEO conference has been cancelled.

Ms. Berry reminded everyone that another meeting will be needed in two weeks to discuss possible movement of polling places because of election judge vacancies.

Mr. Manahan asked for a motion to adhere to the CDC guidelines when configuring polling places for early voting and election day. Mr. Woodley made the motion; seconded by Mr. Foster. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Members Political Activities:

None

Unfinished Business:

Ms. Berry will provide an analysis of the staff's overtime for a vote by mail election as compared to an in-person election.

New Business:

None

Scheduling of Next Meeting:

The next board meeting will be held on Wednesday July 29, 2020, at 10:00 a.m.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Mr. Woodley; seconded by Mr. Foster to adjourn the meeting at 11:31 a.m. The motion passed unanimously.