

# Minutes

Talbot County Board of Elections  
215 Bay Street  
Easton, MD 21601  
*November 15, 2017*

## **Present:**

### **Board**

Walter W. Black, Jr., Vice President (D)  
Richard B. Bulman (R)  
Susan MacKinnon (D)  
John F. Hall (R)

### **Staff**

Jeri Cook, Election Director

### **Board Attorney**

Philip T. Cronan

### **State Board of Elections**

Desvin Gabbidon, Regional Manager, Field Support Division

### **Public**

Chris Koch

The monthly meeting of the Talbot County Board of Elections was held on November 15, 2017 in Conference Room # One at the Board office indicated above. In Mr. Secrist's absence for medical reasons, Mr. Black called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Mr. Black noted that a quorum was present.

## **Approval of Minutes of October 18, 2017**

Mr. Black asked if the Board had any corrections or additions to the minutes of the meeting of October 18, 2017, a copy of which had been forwarded to the Board Members in advance of the meeting. Upon motion duly made (Mr. Bulman) and seconded (Ms. MacKinnon), the minutes for October 18, 2017 were approved unanimously.

## **Addition/Changes to the Agenda**

Mr. Hall asked that a discussion of adding a link from this local Board's webpage to the State Board's results webserver be discussed under New Business. Upon

motion duly made (Mr. Hall) and seconded (Mr. Black), the agenda, so amended, was approved unanimously.

### **Public Comment**

No public comments were received.

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

Ms. Cook reported that she had met with Dr. Kelly Griffith, Superintendent of Schools. Dr. Griffith had informed her that the school-year calendar for the next two years had been presented to the Board of Education and that the schools used as polling sites would not be closed for Election Day. Dr. Griffith said that we would be able to use the auditorium space to allow for better accessibility for voters.

Ms. MacKinnon stated that it astounded her that Talbot County Schools used for voting sites were closed for the Waterfowl Festival but not for the election. She urged that it is this Board's duty to pursue the closing of the schools for each election. She expressed her intention of continuing to press the issue. She stated that the area of the High School auditorium used for voting was filled with chairs, limiting voters' movement. The voting area used in the last election was dark and lacked adequate electrical outlets for the voting equipment.

Ms. Cook reported that Dr. Griffith had agreed that the lighting in the exterior area of the auditorium needed to be improved for purposes of the election. Ms. Cook stated that she planned to meet with the Board of Education's facility manager in December to discuss the possible use of the auditorium area instead of the front lobby.

Ms. MacKinnon urged the Board to write a letter to the School Board expressing its disapproval of the failure to close the schools. Mr. Hall stated that he was in sympathy with the School Board's position and pointed out that alternate means of voting through Early Voting and absentee ballots made it very easy to vote if a voter found it difficult to vote at the schools. Mr. Bulman expressed support for Ms. MacKinnon's position but felt that pressing the issue in the same manner as had been done in the past merely guaranteed frustration. He suggested that, since the school-year calendar had been presented to the Board of Education through the 2018 election, it might be more fruitful to craft a different approach for the 2020 presidential election.

Ms. Cook reported that a memorandum of understanding between the Easton Fire Department and the Election Board for the use of the Easton Fire Hall for early voting had been signed.

Ms. Cook is in the process of updating and verifying the streets in each district precinct and each board of education district. The board of education districts had been updated with the assistance of Allison Murphy, Caroline County Election Director. The

staff has worked closely with Mark Cohoon, Talbot County Geographic Information Systems manager, to verify the streets in each district precinct. The Director and a staff member from Howard County will be assisting in this process to complete this project as quickly as possible to get updated information to the voters of Talbot County,

She met with Andrew Hollis, County Manager, and Jessica Morris regarding the State Board's disaster recovery plan. In the event of disaster, it would be useful for other county departments to know what assistance the local board might require.

The State Board of Elections approved the use of one Ballot marking device per precinct unless additional machines are requested. This is the same policy that was used during the 2016 election. She would request two ballot marking devices be used during early voting and at the Easton Fire Hall on Election Day, due to the number of voters assigned the Easton Fire Hall.

She had met with the League of Women Voters and discussed procedures for filing as a candidate. There have been no new candidate filings, but there has been interest. She attended the County's quarterly department heads' meeting.

She is currently looking into purchasing a secured desktop ballot container to house the multiple ballots that will be used at Early Voting and Easton Fire Hall on Election Day. There could be as many as twenty-eight different ballot styles if all Board of Education positions have contests at early voting and up to 20 ballot styles at the Easton Fire Hall on Election Day.

She announced that the entire staff would be attending a "best practices" session in Queen Anne's County on December 4, 2017. The office will be closed from 9:00 a.m. until about 3:00 pm to attend this meeting.

### **Attorney's Report**

Mr. Cronan reported that the attorneys' breakout group meeting at the biennial meeting had reviewed existing policy.

### **Old Business**

Regarding invoices, Ms. Cook reported that the voter notification cards had not yet been used but will be used at the conclusion of the updating of the street files and more may need to be purchased depending on how many updates are needed. The current purchase was warranted because of the updating of the street files to include updated information on school board precincts. Regarding the budget, Ms. Cook stated that there were necessarily differences between the figures she presented in an Excel spreadsheet format and the County's financial report for two reasons. First, her figures were up-to-date, while the County's entries were delayed. Second, she occasionally

found that the County assigned expenses to categories other than those she had used, and she is updating her information to reflect the differences.

Mr. Hall asked for additional information regarding the September 28, 2017 Election Directors' minutes with specific reference to the local board's webpage containing a link to the State Board's website containing election results. Mr. Gabbidon stated that the new procedure was necessary because E S & S, the State Board's contractor, would no longer post election results. Mr. Hall asked if there were any expense in having the link added to this Board's webpage. Ms. Cook answered that she would reach out to Parker Durham, Talbot County's director of Information Technology, to work with Teresa Goode to accomplish this and there should be no additional expense.

Mr. Hall moved that a link be added to this Board's webpage by which a viewer could be directed to the State Board's election results webpage; Mr. Bulman seconded. Ms. MacKinnon asked Ms. Cook and Mr. Gabbidon if there were any contrary reason. Both responded that they knew of none. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Cook distributed two customer satisfaction survey forms in both of which the visitor to the office praised Ms. Goode's performance.

Ms. Cook noted that, at the biennial meeting, information regarding election security measures had been discussed in depth.

### **New Business**

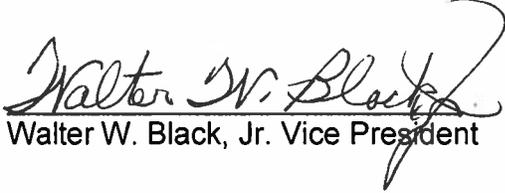
Ms. Cook reported that the next meeting of the Maryland Associations of Election Officials would be held in Ocean City in March 2018. She will give exact dates at the December meeting.

Mr. Koch asked for clarification regarding the timing of the completion of the street boundaries and the mailing of voter notification cards. Ms. Cook said that the projected completion date was the end of December, but, in any event, the task would be completed well in advance of the 2018 primary election.

Mr. Black announced that the next meeting would be December 13, 2017 at 9:30 a.m.

Upon motion to adjourn by Mr. Hall, seconded by Mr. Bulman, and approved unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Attested,

  
Walter W. Black, Jr. Vice President

Respectfully submitted,

  
John F. Hall, Secretary