

Board Meeting Minutes
September 11, 2013

Attendees:

Board:

Susan MacKinnon, (D) Board President
Joseph Secrist, (R) Board Member
Walter Black, (D) Board Member
Mary-Beth Goll, (D) Substitute Member
Venita Southworth (R) Substitute Member

Staff:

Patti Mitchell, Election Director
Sabrina Fishell, Administrative Assistant

Public:

Don English
Nick Panuzio
Nate Southworth
Joedy Cecil
Chris Polk, reporter for the Star Democrat

Susan MacKinnon, Board President called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m.

MINUTES

The minutes of the August 14, 2013 meeting were reviewed. Ms. MacKinnon asked if there were any corrections, changes or additions to the minutes.

Mr. Black made a motion to accept the minutes and Ms. Southworth seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion.

At this time, the board members and the public introduced themselves.

OLD BUSINESS

Polling Places:

Ms. Mitchell stated that we have a very good working relationship with the polling places that we currently use. She is only looking to see if they can be improved upon. Today's meeting is just to be a discussion on the schools that were visited.

Easton High School was the first school that was visited. Ms. Mitchell stated that the parking was well laid out. She stated that there were 216 parking spaces in addition to the 15 handicap parking spots. She estimated that half of the parking is taken up by student drivers, so it would leave approximately 100 parking spaces plus the 15 handicap parking for voters. Ms. Goll stated that she thought the entrance where voters would be entering was close and would be easy to mark off. She also thought there were ample handicap parking spots. Mr. Secrist asked about the amount of parking at the Louis G. Smith Armory. Ms. Mitchell estimated the parking spots available to be 55. Mr. Black stated that he was informed that if we did use the Easton High School for a polling place, there would be parking spots isolated for voters. A discussion followed on how the Easton High School was used in past elections. Ms. Southworth asked which polling place the Easton High School would be replacing. Ms. Mitchell stated that the voters in District 1 Precinct 2, which is the Louis G. Smith Armory, would be moved. Ms. Mitchell stated that in the last 3 election cycles, the person in

charge of opening the Armory on Election Day has been late and we have come close to not having the polling place open on time. She also said that there are always voters waiting there. She stated that if there were a national emergency, we would not be able to use the Armory. Ms. Southworth stated that voters have complained about crossing Route 50 to get to the Armory and Ms. Goll stated that voters have complained about the lack of parking at the Armory. Ms. MacKinnon observed that at the Easton High School, there was a time frame of only 20-30 minutes that the students and buses would be present when voters were present. A general discussion followed on the pros and cons of using the Easton High School as a polling place, in place of the Louis G. Smith Armory. Mr. Secrist inquired about looking at alternative locations instead of the Easton High School to move the voters from the Armory. Ms. MacKinnon suggested that we stick with using the schools as previously discussed in our meetings.

Chapel District Elementary School in Cordova - Ms. Mitchell stated there are several reasons for looking for an alternative to using the Cordova Fire House. She states that the night before the election, the Cordova Fire House has a paper bingo that does not get over until 10 p.m. This makes it so late for the Election office to set up the polling place. In addition, the morning of the election, the person in charge of opening the Fire House is usually late. Ms. Mitchell states the parking lot is all stone, not black top and there is not a good spot to place the election signs. Mr. Secrist stated that he was a member of the Cordova Fire Department and he could arrange to have the Cordova Fire Department opened on time. Ms. Mitchell stated that in the past, the Fire Department would not allow that. Ms. Southworth stated that at the Chapel District Elementary School there was an area where voters would have to enter that the concrete was broken up and would

not be accessible to someone handicapped. A general discussion followed about using the Chapel District Elementary School as a polling place.

Easton Middle School - Mr. Black stated he did not like this location for a polling place. It was agreed by everyone that this would not be a good location for a polling place.

White Marsh Elementary School in Trappe - It was agreed by everyone that this would not be a good change.

St. Michaels Middle-High School - Ms. MacKinnon stated this was the last & best location that was looked at. Ms. Mitchell stated that the gym was the perfect place to hold the election. Ms. Mitchell said the judges will be told to bring coolers for their food and drinks, as there will not be a refrigerator provided for them. Ms. MacKinnon stated that she thinks we can discuss minor details, like a lunch room or bathrooms for the judges to use with Ms. Gayle Secrist, if we are permitted to use this location.

The board decided that out of all the schools looked at; the two schools we would be interested in using as polling places would be the Easton High School and the St. Michaels Middle-High School. Ms. Mitchell stated she will convey this to Ms. Gayle Secrist.

Ms. Southworth asked if the board had a responsibility to the community to inform them about the possible changes to polling place locations. Ms. MacKinnon said that before the community is informed we should get permission to use the school's first.

Mr. Secrist made a motion to inform the school board that we are interested in using the Easton High School and St. Michaels Middle-High

School as polling places in the 2014 Primary and General Election. Ms. Southworth seconded the motion. All board members were in favor and the motion passed. Ms. Mitchell said that she will contact Ms. Gayle Secrist about using the Easton High School and the St. Michaels Middle-High School.

5 Member Board:

Ms. MacKinnon asked Ms. Mitchell for an update on the status on the letter that was sent to the Talbot County Council. Ms. Mitchell stated that she has not heard anything back from John Craig, County Manager for Talbot County. She said the letter was dated August 19th and was sent on August 20th.

Mr. Secrist asked about updating the website. He states the agenda on the website is from March. A discussion followed between Ms. Mitchell and Mr. Secrist about the website. Ms. Mitchell said she will ask Mr. Durham to assist her with the website.

NEW BUSINESS

Open Meeting Class Requirement:

Ms. Mitchell informed the Board Members that beginning October 1, 2013 there is a training requirement for public bodies. She states that each member of the board must take this online course and print out the certificate and she will make a copy of it for the files. Mr. Secrist stated that the sheet Ms. Mitchell handed out did not state that all members needed to take the training. He read from the sheet, "Effective October 1, 2013, each public entity subject to the Open Meetings Act must designate a member, officer, or employee to receiving training on the requirements of

the Act." Ms. MacKinnon stated that each member of the board is entitled to take the course. Ms. Mitchell said that she thinks each member of the board should take the course. A discussion followed about the course. Ms. Southworth stated that in place of saying it is a requirement for each board member, it should be stated that it is a strong recommendation that each board member take the course. Ms. Mitchell agreed with Ms. Southworth. Ms. Mitchell stated that if each member of the board wants to take the online course and print out their certificate and bring it to the October 9th meeting and at that time, the board can vote on who will be the designated person for the Talbot County Board of Election.

Mr. Nick Panuzio:

Ms. MacKinnon informed the board that Mr. Nick Panuzio from the Republican Central Committee had asked to be put on the agenda explaining the Republican Party's position on asking that the polling places remain the same. Mr. Panuzio explained that he had heard reports of a number of polling places that were going to be changed. He wanted to go on record of opposing these changes with the exception of the St. Michaels location. He stated that he had complained about the St. Michaels Library as a polling place to Ms. Mitchell in the past. Mr. Panuzio stated that he thinks the 2014 election will be a huge election. He also stated that he believes if the schools were closed, it would not be an issue to use them. He believes that voters are used to voting at the current locations and will resist voting if changes to their polling places are made. He said that he feels the less change made the better. He had not heard of anyone complaining about the Armory and he believes the Easton High School would be a difficult place for people to vote. He just wanted to go on record resisting these changes. Mr. Panuzio did state that he was pleased that the board was only

considering 2 polling place changes. Ms. MacKinnon thanked Mr. Panuzio for sharing his thoughts.

Other Business:

Ms. Mitchell gave the board members her evaluation form. She stated that this will be discussed in Executive Session at the next meeting.

Mr. Secrist asked for a director's report for the month. Ms. Mitchell informed the board members that we have attended lessons learned meetings in Queen Anne and Caroline County. She also said we are during daily updates of voter registrations. Ms. Mitchell and Ms. Fishell are taking some vacation days.

Adjournment:

Mr. Black made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Ms. Goll. The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, October 9th at 9:30 a.m.